POETICAL WORKS

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT

NOTE BY THE PUBLISHERS

This edition omits a few short poems and also some notes and short introductions to the poems, which are the copyright of Messrs Black of Edinburgh

It contains, however, an original critical Biography by Mr F T Palgrave, editor of "The Golden Treasury;" and also some original introductions and notes from the pen of a gentleman familiar with Scotch literature and scenery

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DEDICATION

The first of our living Statesmen is not only remarkable for the largeness of his political views and his consummate mastery of details, but for the generous confidence with which he regards the working classes of his fellow-countrymen, and for his untiring energy in promoting their welfare He is also known as a lover of the beautiful and the noble in literature, especially as exhibited in the poetry of the heroic ages A popular edition of Sir Walter Scott's Poems has therefore a double right to the sanction of his name. The writer of the following Memoir avails himself of the privilege which has been accorded him, and with sentiments of the deepest admiration and respect, dedicates this book to Mr. Gladstone

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SIR WALTER SCOTT

WITHIN that small number of our countrymen who have been known and admired throughout the cultured world during this century, three hold a place of unrivalled pre-eminence,—Wellington, Scott, and Byron. Each of the three kingdoms claims one of these heroes; but although Ireland and England may also point to something distinguishably national in the genius of their sons, yet it will not be disputed that Scotland is far more exclusively and fully represented by Marmion and the Heart of Midlothian, than the spirit of England by Childe Harold, or that of Ireland by the Peninsular campaigns. We read in the early ages of the world how whole nations sprang from, and were known by the name of some one great chief, to whom a more than human rank was assigned by the poetry and the gratitude of later generations. Doris and Ionia were personified in Ion and Dorus. It appears not altogether fanciful to think similarly of Scott. In the phrase employed by the historians of Greece, he might be styled the *eponymous hero* of Scotland. He sums up, or seems to sum up, in the most conspicuous manner, those leading qualities in which his countrymen, at least his countrymen of old, differ from their fellow Britons. No one human being can, however, be completely the representative man of his race, and some points may be observed in Scott which do not altogether reflect the national image. Yet, on the whole, Mr. Carlyle's estimate will probably be accepted as the truth: "No Scotchman of his time was more entirely Scotch than Walter Scott; the good and the not so good, which all Scotchmen inherit, ran through every fibre of him."

The first and best reason for attempting the sketch of a poet's life is to throw light upon his poetry. In the case of Scott, whose verse forms only the earlier half of his writings, such a sketch would in strictness end with his forty-fifth year. It would be unpleasant, however, to break off thus: and the story of his career, even if he had not been author of "Marmion" and "Old Mortality," is in itself one of the most interesting which we possess. An eminently good and noble hearted man, tried by almost equal extremes of fortune, and victorious over both,—the life of Scott would be a tragic drama in the fullest sense, moving and teaching us at once through pity, and love, and terror, even if he had not also, in many ways, deserved the title of greatness. The aim of these pages will hence be to present a biography, complete in its main points, and including some remarks

on Scott's position as a writer, which the accompanying narrative will, it is hoped, render easily intelligible

Scott's life may be conveniently divided into three periods · that of the child and the youth who had not yet found where his strength lay (1771-1799) · that of his poetry, whether edited and translated by him, or original (1799-1814), that of his novels, his wealth and his poverty (1814-1832) The time when his powers were fully matured, and his happiest years, would lie about midway across the second and third of these periods, for the full "flower of his life" was fugitive in proportion to its brilliancy A perceptible air of unity marks the lives of most poets The character and circumstances of Scott, on the contrary, present a crowd of singular contrasts; there is a deep underlying harmony, which it is the main object of this sketch to trace, but at first sight he is a strikingly complex creature; the number of antitheses about him, which aid in making him so representative a Scotchman, is the first and one of the main points which the reader should bear in mind. An antithesis of this kind meets us at once in the story, indeed, preceding the poet's birth, it exercised perhaps the most marked influence amongst the circumstances which moulded his career Both in its position and its traditions, his family was eminently typical of much that we associate with his country Though a solicitor of moderate means, at a time when the profession had not won its way to a liberal standing in popular estimation, Scott's father, also Walter, reckoned socially as of "gentle blood," in virtue less of his high character than of his Border descent, which was traced through the Scotts of Harden to the main stem (now holding the ducal honours of Buccleuch), in the fourteenth century. The coarse plundering life of this and other clans, whose restlessness and roving warfare were long the misfortune and misery of the "Marches," has received from Scott all the tints which poetry could throw over an age softened by distance, the romance which it had in his eyes may have been increased by the curious resemblance which the energetic anarchy of the Border families establishes between them and the clans, more correctly so called, of the Highlands; yet, if we turn from ballads to the actual story of the frontier raids, it is that common tale of unholy ravage and murder which rather deserved the curse, than the consecration of poetry Remark also that the forays, so dear in the poet's eyes, do not belong to the warfare for the independence of Scotland, that they had very little political colouring, and were, in fact, picturesque fragments of a barbarous time maintained long after date, through the mutual jealousy of the two neighbour kingdoms They exhibit the law of hand against the law of head, or, again, from a more poetical point of view, they may be regarded as bold protests in favour of individuality, against the monotonizing character of civilized and peaceful existence Like much that we shall have to note in Scott's own career, the border clans were, in a certain sense, practical anachronisms, whose very likeness to the wild Highlanders of the north placed them in striking con-

trust to the love of law and peaceful thrift which lies deep in the Scottish nature, and, until a few years before Scott's birth, led the Lowlanders to regard their Celtic fellow-countrymen with a contempt and hatred, in effacing which it was the noble mission of his own genius to be the main instrument.

These family details are here dwelt on, because they bear upon that quality which is peculiar to Scott's genius, and makes at once its strength and its weakness. It would be difficult to name another instance of a mind so habitually balanced between the real and the unreal. There have been those who had, for example, a strong grasp of past ages; but they have either comprehended them without regretting, as Hallam and Macaulay, or have distinctly preferred them and adopted their ways of thought. Poets, again, have made as great a power as Scott over the actual and the present, as Burns and Crabbe; but they had no sympathy with the past: or have chosen their subjects in the past, as Dryden in his Fables, and Byron in his Plays,—but then it was a simple poetical expedient, not implying a true revival of former times: or they have lived in an ideal world, as Shelley,—but then that world was their own creation, and entirely absorbed them: or they have believed in and reproduced their own age, together with one long anterior, as Milton,—but then their older subject-matter was religion: or, in another way, as Shakespeare, they have recast all ages in their own mind, or were hardly conscious of the difference between the ages, as Chaucer and Dante. But it will strike every reader how decidedly Scott's poetical conception of the past, and his relations to the present, differ from those just enumerated. As a child of the critical eighteenth century, and the son of a shrewd Scotch solicitor, Scott was, on one side, a born sceptic in romance, the Middle Ages, and Jacobitism;—as a cadet of the Scotts of Harden, and a man of the strongest imaginative temperament, he was likewise a born believer. Now, not only his writings, which in the strictest sense reproduce himself, but his life and character, present a continual half-conscious attempt at a real and practical compromise between these opposing elements. In the details, what struck his contemporaries was plain but genial common sense; in the whole, what strikes the later student is the predominance of the poetical impulse. Whilst the peculiar blending of the elements is what gives Scott his place in our literature, and renders him singularly interesting as a man, it cannot be concealed that it carried certain weaknesses with it: he had *les défauts de ses qualités*. And in this compromise between past and present, romance and prose, which he attempted, beside that great and long-continued error which ruined his worldly prosperity, and dispossessed him of the castle of his dreams, one may note some minor inconsistencies, which have exposed him to censure from those who did not observe the peculiarity of his nature. Thus, although naturally one of the most independent of men, we find him treating the Prince Regent with an almost servility of deference, when offered the Poet Laureateship; although a Lowland Scot, only distantly and dimly sharing in Highland blood through

a Campbell ancestor (the clan, we may remark in passing, towards which his writings show a marked dislike), when the Prince, then George IV, visited Edinburgh, Scott gave the pageantry of the reception a completely Celtic character,—forgetting at once not only that national feud between Lowlander and Highlander which he had been the first to set forth before the whole world, but even the historical proprieties of the occasion He appeared himself in Highland dress, whilst the heir of the Hanoverian line wore the "Steuart tartan"! Scott's Border sympathies, again, led him to regard the profession of arms with a somewhat extreme admiration; but when his son desires to enter the army, he regrets the choice In his politics we observe the same uncertain direction, whilst feeling in the strongest way for the poor, and by nature hostile to the violence and unfairness of party, we find him ever and anon lowering himself to the petty interests of the Toryism of Edinburgh, or abetting the coarse repression of popular spirit which discredited the Administrations of the time, and then, with a fitter sense of his vocation in life, adding a "so much for politics—about which, after all, my neighbours the *Blackcocks* know about as much as I do" (Lockhart's "Life of Scott," iii: 209, the edition of 1856, in ten volumes, is that quoted) —That the reader may understand the kind of character who will be presented to him, these points are noted here, they will be illustrated by the details which follow But is not Scott, in all this antithetically blended nature, shrewdness in details, romance in the whole,—minor inconsistencies, with a general unity and individuality of character,—a perfect type of the common sense combined with the *ingenium perfervidum Scotorum*, a true representative of the great race amongst which it was the dearest pride of his heart to be numbered?

I

"Every Scotchman," says Sir Walter Scott in his brief Autobiography, "has a pedigree." We need not trace his back in detail beyond his great-grandfather, the staunch old Jacobite known as *Beardie*, who died in 1729 Beardie's second son, Robert, a Whig, drove and sold the cattle which had been the plunder of his reiving ancestors, at other times farming the small estate of Sandy-Knowe or Smailholme, midway between Melrose and Kelso By marriage with a Haliburton, Robert Scott became for a time proprietor of Dryburgh Abbey The eldest son, Walter, born 1729, settled in Edinburgh as a "Writer to the Signet," and in that city, after the loss of several infants, Walter, third son of six children who survived, was born, August 15, 1771 His mother, Anne Rutherford, was daughter to a distinguished professor of medicine in the University, and a lady of the ancient family of Swinton; and "joined to a light and happy temper of

mind, a strong turn to study poetry and works of imagination." Beyond these indications, little is known of Scott's mother to support the popular fancy which ascribes filial distinction to maternal qualities; in fact, the father, a man of fine but singular disposition, fills a far larger space in the reminiscences of the poet's earlier years, and was, long after, painted by him with loving fidelity in "Redgauntlet." A fever in infancy rendered Walter lame in his right leg, and he was sent for recovery to his grandfather Robert, at Sandy Knowe. From this place, where Scott was nursed for about two years, dated his earliest recollections. Tales of the Jacobite rising, and of Border life and its heroes, neither as yet too distant for genuine tradition, were soon taught him; "Merrymen all," he says, "of the persuasion and calling of Robin Hood and Little John;" and one can imagine the romantic dignity under which the violent deeds of "auld Watt of Harden" and the rest, were presented by family pride to the child who was to immortalize them. Visits to Bath and elsewhere were made for the sake of Walter's health, and he so far threw off the weakness of limb that, until the early decay of his constitution, it hardly disqualified him from any vigorous exercise. Scott's lameness, like Byron's, impelled his eager and courageous disposition to a more than average display of physical energy; one may trace to it, in some degree, the rather overstrained emphasis laid by Scott on field sports and volunteer drill whilst his strength lasted; excess in which, not improbably, was one reason why he found himself an old man before fifty; (1820, vi: 269.) Ingenious excuses are never wanting to give the body more than its due share, and when there is activity of mind also, as in Scott and Byron, it takes its revenge in premature decay. On the other hand, the boy's lameness had a nobler result; giving him leisure for a large range of reading,—miscellaneous indeed, but lying in those imaginative regions, the air of which strengthens the higher nature within us. He entered the Grammar School of Edinburgh in 1778. A letter written by a gifted lady presents an excellent picture of the child as he was at six,—indeed, of Scott as he remained through life:—"boy for ever," in Shakespeare's phrase, with the lasting childhood and sensitiveness of genius.

"I last night supped in Mr. Walter Scott's. He has the most extraordinary genius of a boy I ever saw. He was reading a poem to his mother when I went in. I made him read on; it was the description of a shipwreck. His passion rose with the storm. He lifted his eyes and hands. *There's the mast gone,* says he; *crash it goes!—they will all perish!* After his agitation, he turns to me. *That is too melancholy, I had better read you something more amusing.* I preferred a little chat, and asked his opinion of Milton and other books he was reading, which he gave me wonderfully . . . When taken to bed last night, he told his aunt he liked that lady [Mrs. Cockburn, the writer], *for I think she is a virtuoso like myself.—Dear Walter,* says Aunt Jenny, *what is a virtuoso?—Don't ye know? Why, it's one who wishes and will know everything.*"

Those about Scott may have been already impressed, like Mrs Cockburn, with his mental energy and determination to "know everything" But in the Autobiography he adopts another tone, which reappears in his later letters He was conscious that industry had not come to him without a struggle. About one of his brothers he remarks, that he had "the same determined indolence that marked us all." No description could, at first sight, appear less applicable to himself If there be one constant attribute of real genius, it is vast capacity for and enjoyment of labour Genius often makes us feel that it is almost synonymous with *patience*, as Buffon and Reynolds called it And it would be difficult to find a man of genius whose recorded works,—never more than a portion of the man's whole work,—are more extensive and varied than Scott's He had, in the highest degree, another charming quality, often, though not so essentially an attribute of intellectual excellence—Modesty Hence, throughout his life he undervalued himself, and thought little of his own energy. Yet we cannot doubt that this "determined indolence," like the irritability of temper which he so subdued that few suspected its existence, was a real element in his nature At school (1778-1783), Scott's zeal for study is inferior to the ardour of Shelley; he takes not the slightest interest in what is not only the most perfect, but the most essentially "romantic" of literatures,—that of Greece, even in Latin going only far enough to set the highest value upon the modern verse of Buchanan, and after him, on Lucan and Claudian He was satisfied with a working knowledge of French, German, Italian, and Spanish Perhaps the family failing expended itself in confining his studies to the circle marked out by strong creative impulse, the history, manners, romances, and poetry of mediaeval and modern Europe. Looking back now at the result, the Poems and the Novels, one is inclined to say that Scott in all this followed the imperious promptings of nature. This, however, was not his own judgment He regretted nothing more bitterly than his want of the severe classical training "I forgot the very letters of the Greek alphabet," he says in the Autobiography of 1808, "a loss never to be repaired, considering what that language is, and who they were who employed it in their compositions" And again, "I would at this moment give half the reputation I have had the good fortune to acquire, if by doing so I could rest the remaining part upon a sound foundation" Within the range noticed, however, his "appetite for books was as ample and undiscriminating as it was indefatigable, few ever read so much," he adds, "or to so little purpose." Spenser, Tasso's "Jerusalem" in the English, "above all, Bishop Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry," are specified; and although throughout his life Scott exhibited a reluctance to employ his powerful mind on subjects requiring hard thought, and was disposed to defer any work upon which he was engaged to the last, yet in the main we may regard the "determined indolence" as absorbed into the meditative atmosphere (if we may use the word) of the poetical nature as the undersoil whence so many masterpieces

of imaginative writing were destined to grow. There is a strong general likeness on this point between Scott and the greatest of his contemporaries in poetry; and the words in which Wordsworth described himself would have borne an equal application to his friend:—

> [illegible]
> [illegible]

"My life," Scott himself says, in one of the most remarkable passages of his Diary (Dec 27, 1825), "though not without its fits of waking and strong exertion, has been a sort of dream, spent in

> [illegible]

I have worn a wishing cap, the power of which has been to divert present griefs by a touch of the wand of imagination, and gild over the future by prospects more fair than can be realised." Scott's character was essentially formed and finished in early youth, and these words may be considered the key to his whole career and character. Worldly wisdom, love of social rank, passion for lands and goods,—these are the motives by which it has been often assumed that he was guided. Mr Carlyle even appears in his remarkable Essay to regard Scott as unentitled to the claim of greatness, because he did not throw his strength into grasping the problems of modern life or the eternal difficulties of human thought,—and treats him as an eminently genial and healthy man of the world, whose writings were rather pieces of skilful and rapid manufacture for the day, than likely to prove "heirlooms for ever." But so "antithetically mixed" was his nature, that at the same time he was in the spirit hidden away with poetry and the past, and moving among romantic worlds of his own creation. Viewed from one side, Scott, as printer and lawyer, with "a thread of the attorney in him," as "laird" and man of society, appears in unromantic contrast to most of his "brothers in immortal verse;" viewed from another, it may be doubted whether any of his contemporaries lived the life of the poet so completely.

A strong capacity for such work as his nature secretly preferred, and towards which he was unconsciously finding his way, marks the boyhood of Scott. This found its main exercise at first in a love for inventing and relating marvellous tales which amounted to real passion. "Whole holidays were spent in this pastime, which continued for two or three years, and had, I believe, no small effect in directing the turn of my imagination to the chivalrous and romantic in poetry and prose." "He used to interest us," writes a lady who was then his playmate, "by telling us the *visions*, as he called them, which he had lying alone. . . . Child as I was, I could not help being highly delighted with his description of the glories he had seen. . . . Recollecting these descriptions," of which we cannot but

regret that she preserved no memorial, "radiant as they were, I have often thought since, that there must have been a bias in his mind to superstition—the marvellous seemed to have such power over him, though the mere offspring of his own imagination, that the expression of his face, habitually that of genuine benevolence, mingled with a shrewd innocent humour, changed greatly while he was speaking of these things, and showed a deep intenseness of feeling, as if he were awed even by his own recital." Scott, as he was throughout life, is again before us in this little delineation, the kindness, the superstition, the shrewdness and o[illegible]ady sees "Waverley" and "Lammermoor" in their infancy.

Meanwhile that other element of poetry which is only second in Scott's writings to the picture of human life,—the natural landscape,—began to assert its influence over him. Actors were thronging fast within the theatre of his imagination; the first sketches of the background and scenery for the drama were now supplied. From a visit to Kelso, "the most beautiful, if not the most romantic village in Scotland," Scott traced his earliest consciousness of the magic of Nature. Wordsworth's passion was for

> the Visions of the hills
> And Souls of lonely places.

The passion of Scott differed from this through the leading place which historical memories held in his heart. "The romantic feelings which I have described as predominating in my mind gradually rested upon and associated themselves with the grand features of the landscape around me, and the historical incidents or traditional legends connected with many of them gave to my admiration a sort of intense impression of reverence, which at times made my heart feel too big for its bosom. From this time the love of natural beauty, more especially when combined with ancient ruins, or remains of our fathers' piety or splendour, became with me an insatiable passion, which I would willingly have gratified by travelling over half the globe." Scott's transfer from the Edinburgh High School to the College (1783-1786), probably gave him the first freedom to indulge this impulse within bounds which, though narrow in themselves, were of inexhaustible interest to his sympathetic imagination. Without "travelling over half the globe" he could create a realm of his own, sufficient for himself and for his readers. It is astonishing to look at the map, and observe within how small a radius from Edinburgh the hundred little places lie which he has made familiar names throughout the whole civilized world.—We have noticed that Scott's father, (with himself in youth,) is painted in "Redgauntlet." Nothing was ever better contrasted in a romance than these two characters, and one sees that the real *Alan Fairford* was already beginning at college those adventurous ways which may have made the old Writer to the Signet feel that the wild moss-trooping blood of Harden was once more at work within the veins of his gallant boy. A wise confidence left

Walter free. He wandered for days together over the historical sites of the neighbourhood, and when at home, in lieu of devotion to the prosaic mysteries of the Scottish law, was able to please his fancy by founding that collection of wayside songs and historical relics which filled so large a space in the innocent happiness of his after-years, and was not less a necessary of life to him than his cabinet of rocks and minerals is to the geologist.

The mode in which Scott observed Nature is strictly parallel to his representation of human life. As he rarely enters into the depths of character, preferring to exhibit it through action, and painting rather the great general features of an age than dwelling on the details for their own sake, so he mainly deals with the landscape; two or three admirable pictures excepted. Compare his descriptions with those by Wordsworth, Keats, or Shelley, and the difference in regard to the points noted will be felt at once. Scott was aware of this. "I was unable," says the Autobiography, "with the eye of a painter to dissect the various parts of the scene, to comprehend how the one bore upon the other. . . . I have never, indeed, been capable of doing this with precision or nicety." A curious testimony is borne to the truth of this remark by Scott's failure (like Goethe's) to master even the rudiments of landscape drawing. "Even the humble ambition, which I long cherished, of making sketches of those places which interested me, from a defect of eye or of hand was totally ineffectual." But this absence of power over landscape forms was compensated for by a singularly fine perception of colour, examples of which have been given by Mr. Ruskin in the interesting criticisms on Scott contained in his "Modern Painters." Scott's almost total want of ear for music was a calamity which he shared with a large number of great poets; the strong sense of the melody in words and the harmonies of rhythm appearing to leave no space in their organisation for inarticulate music.

—Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter,

if true at all, is true only of the poet.

Beside the irresistible impulse which directed Scott's reading to "romantic" and poetical literature, to story telling, and to country wanderings, he was seriously impeded by illness from pursuing his college studies. And by the time the Academical course was concluded, the passion which governed his youth, and perhaps secretly coloured the complexion of his future life, had already fallen upon him. Little has been told of this early love: force of feeling, and force to repress the signs of feeling, are two of the principal elements in Scott's character; he undergoes evil with a pathetic simplicity; he suffers in silence. From what, however, we can learn, it is natural to read in the "love that never found his earthly close" the true source of that peculiar shade of pensive melancholy which runs like a silver thread through almost everything he wrote, is heard as a "far-off Aeolian note" in all his

poetry, and breaks out at last during his later years of misfortune with strange power in his "Journal" This strong passion kept him safe from "the ambush of young days," and threw over his whole life the halo of a singular purity. Meantime the first result was probably to reconcile him to work for his livelihood, and even prepare for following his father's profession —alien from Scott's nature as a conveyancer's office must have been. He was bound apprentice for four years (1786-1790) An acquaintance with Scottish law, which he used with effect in some of his novels, was the chief fruit of this apprenticeship, for we can hardly reckon as a gain that half-introduction to business habits on which he afterwards relied with so fatal a security It was not, however, as a "Writer to the Signet" that Scott finally entered the law (1792), having been turned towards the more liberal career of an Advocate by the influence of the gently-born intellectual society with which he now became familiar Burns, of whom he has left a striking description, he only saw; but with most or all of the remaining eminent Scotchmen of the time he was acquainted Clerk of Eldin, Corehouse, Jeffrey, and before long the dearest of his early friends, William Erskine, are prominent amongst many other names; for men lived together then after the most social fashion in Edinburgh (that excellent feature in life which is lost when capital cities grow large), and clubs and conviviality of all kinds abounded This was a brilliant stage in Scott's career; perhaps the most essentially happy· love, fearful yet warm with hope; open, numerous, and equal friendships, the first introduction to the literature most congenial to his nature, that of Germany, last, not least, the first sight of the Scottish Highlands These regions, the romantic manners of which were to be so brightly painted in his writings, by one of the curious contrasts which are frequent in his life, he entered on a legal visit to evict certain Maclarens,—as he was afterwards the first to carry a gig, Mr Carlyle's symbol of modern "respectability," into the depths of Liddesdale.

This district, under the name of which the best of the Scottish Marches are apparently included, lay within view of Scott's future home, and was the true nursing-ground of his genius Great as he is in describing scenes from Scottish history, great in his pictures of the Highlands, great in delineating life in Edinburgh or Perth or Glasgow, he seems to move with the largest and freest step when his tale or song is of the Border For several successive years (1792-1798) he appears to have made excursions thither, (partially under the excuse of professional business,) when he explored the wild recesses, and observed the wilder life of a race who had not yet been civilized into uniformity; drinking in enjoyment at every pore, "feeling his life," as Wordsworth says of the child, "in every limb;" and as the friend who guided him through the land truly observed, *makin' himsell a' the time* This friend, Mr. Shortreed, was of no small value to Scott. Already he began to show one attribute of genius,—that of attracting others to co-operate with him The old ballads, in collecting which he was assisted by Shortreed,

formed the basis of the first book in which Scott displayed his originality; and we soon after find that he gained similar aid from Dr. Elliott, Messrs. Skene, Ritson, Leyden, and finally from Mr. Train, who provided some of the most effective materials for the Novels, and plays an important though hidden part through Scott's life.

This was the time when the shock of the French Revolution recoiled with the greatest force upon the country. England had joined that monarchical alliance which aimed at compelling France to restore the order of things lately swept away, which had succeeded only in uniting France as one man against her invaders, and which now, in turn, feared revengeful invasion from the armies of the Republic. It is well known how powerfully and diversely the stirring politics of the time affected thinking men in these islands. The movement which was inspiration to Wordsworth, was reaction to Scott. It converted the poetical Jacobitism which was part of his imaginative inheritance from older days into a fervent Toryism. This ardour impelled him now (1797) to take the lead in forming a body of Volunteer Cavalry, for which the political creed then dominant in Scotland afforded him ready followers. Something also of Scott's traditional interest in matters relating to war blended with his patriotic energy; and even the wish to prove, despite of nature, that lameness was no hindrance to physical activity, had its part in the rather excessive zeal with which for some years he threw himself into this mimic and (happily) bloodless campaigning. With similar fervency he entered into the politics of the day. But politics, like poetry, must be studied as an art with the best powers of the mind, if a man is to reach valid conclusions, or show himself a practical statesman; and as Scott, throughout his career, hardly gave to political questions more than the leisure moments of a powerful mind, there is no reason for wonder if this be not the most satisfactory feature in his life, nor one which needs detain the biographer. Scott's insight failed him here; and, as with his study of the law, the only valuable fruit of the years devoted to cavalry drill was a certain accuracy,—contested of course by professional critics,—in his descriptions of warfare. It may be suspected that he and Gibbon pleased themselves with finding, in the vividness of their narratives of battle, some tangible result from months wasted in camp. Genius, however, returns always to its natural track, and abandons imperfect interests. But Scott was as yet totally unaware of his proper vocation. Already indeed love had drawn from him a few lines of exquisitely tender sadness: he had translated the ballad "Lenore" from the German of Burger, and may have been at work upon Goethe's early drama "Goetz," yet he almost prided himself upon contempt of literature as a man's work in life. How singular is this utter self-unconsciousness! Here was the man who was to turn the minds of a whole nation to the picturesque and romantic side of poetry. He was to restore an ideal loyalty to the later Stuarts. He was to make the Middle Ages live once more. But, engrossed as he was at this time by foreign

revolutions, no one in Edinburgh could have known less than the youthful Advocate of the change, itself hardly less than a revolution, which he was destined to work in the thoughts and sentiments of his fellow-creatures

II

We now approach the second step in Scott's life In the course of 1796 the long dream of youthful love was over Little has been told, perhaps little was divulged, of the reasons for the final decision, the lines above alluded to, (those "To a Violet" in the following collection,) cannot be regarded as strict evidence to the facts; and Scott's stern habit of repression where he felt most, has concealed from us not only what he was compelled to bear, but how he bore it. He "had his dark hour" during a solitary ride in Perthshire, the wise sympathy of a friend (afterwards Countess of Purgstall) was some little aid; but the wound bled inwardly, and the evidence appears strong, that, like all passion suppressed in deference to ideas of manliness or philosophy, this worked in him with a secret fever However these things may have been, next year he married (Dec. 1797) a pretty Mdlle. Charpentier, (daughter to a French lady, one of the royalist emigrants,) whom he met and wooed at the little watering-place, Gilsland, in Cumberland,—a village which he afterwards described in his only novel of contemporary life, the tragic "St Ronan's Well" A very brief acquaintance preceded their engagement, it is probable that the congruity of sentiment and taste between them was comparatively slight, and at the distance of "sixty years since" and more, it may be allowable to add that although attended by considerable happiness, faithful attachment on his wife's part, and much that gave a charm to life, this marriage does not appear to have fully satisfied the poet's inner nature

We are here referring to that more hidden and more sensitive side of existence which it is the fate,—not altogether the happier fate,—of the poet to live; which makes the difference between him and other men, and to trace which, as delicately but firmly as we may, is the essential object of the biographer. But it is not meant that Scott would have been conscious of anything incomplete in this chapter of his story Not only did he find the substantial blessings of home in his marriage, but it incidentally led him to the felicity, inferior to that alone, of practically discovering his own work in life He now (1798) took a house in Castle Street, Edinburgh, and a cottage at Lasswade, within the north-eastern end of Eskdale The first was for his attendance at the bar, where he "swept the boards of the Outer House," waiting for briefs which rarely came, and enjoying to the full the cheery convivialities and frank goodfellowship of his town friends Meantime, his heart was gradually withdrawn to Lasswade, where he could live in the past with poetry

and history; where the old Scottish memories to which Burns himself was not attached with more devoted passion, were around him; where, also, began his friendship with the chief house of his clan. To the three peers who bore the title of Buccleuch between this time and his death, especially to Charles, fourth duke, Scott was attracted by the whole force of his nature: not only respecting them with feudal devotion as heads of his blood and family, but loving them as men who sympathised deeply with him in their views of life, religion, politics, relations between rich and poor, home-pursuits and affections; and who systematically used great wealth and power for the happiness of their friends and dependents. There are no pages in Scott's life more pleasing than those which paint his intimacy with this truly *noble family group*; here he carried out with the greatest success his poetical identification between the old world and the new; and to him, in turn, the family name owes a distinction beyond that of Montmorency, Dalberg, or Howard. Under these and other combining influences Scott now added to the ancient Border Ballads, which he was collecting, his own original poems,—some, written for Lewis' *Tales of Wonder*, based on German sentiment; others founded upon the native songs, to which he gave a wider plan with consummate taste. He printed (1799) his translation from Goethe's play, and becoming acquainted with Ellis, Ritson, Heber, and others of that excellent band of scholars by whom our knowledge of the Middle Ages was placed upon a sure footing, turned resolutely to the study of mediaeval imaginative literature, which (1802) issued in the "Border Minstrelsy."

This book marks the great crisis in Scott's life. Henceforth, even if unconsciously to himself, his real work is literature. The publication was not only the first that *made* his name *known*, but led Scott into what proved the most serious business transaction of his life. Many years before he had made friends with James Ballantyne, a young man of whose ability and disposition he thought highly. Ballantyne printed the "Minstrelsy;" at Scott's advice he established a house in Edinburgh; and by 1805 the two became partners in trade. Before long, taking a younger brother, John, into the concern, they added a publishing house to the printing; and Scott's fortune and fall were in due time the result. This partnership is on all accounts the least agreeable chapter in Scott's life; it is only of interest now as illustrating his character. The essence of that character has been defined as an attempt at a practical, not less than at an imaginative compromise between past and present,—between prose (one might almost say) and poetry; ideals realized and realities idealized. The trade-partnership fatally partook in this perilous and delicate compromise. Beside the final loss of wealth and health, Scott's memory has been hence exposed to some misinterpretation. In face of the result, and the clear proofs how it came to pass, he has received almost equal honours for his practical sense and for his greatness in romantic literature. Two men, in fact, are painted in the one Scott of the "Biography;"

the able man of the world in his office, and the poet in his study: giving, with equal mastery and ease, an hour to verse and an hour to business, and appearing to his friends meantime as the Scottish gentleman of property. Now, such a compound being as this could hardly have existed. It is against nature: and, if the estimate here given be correct, there is no nature which it is less like than Scott's. Where the poetical character truly exists, it always predominates; it cannot put off the poet like a dress, and assume the lawyer or the laird; it "moveth altogether, if it move at all." This point must be insisted on, because it is vital to understanding the man and his work. The very speciality of Scott is, not that he presented the ideal gentleman just described, who wrote poetry and novels as pastime, and entered into business like a shrewd Scotchman who knew the worth of money, but that he valued wealth in order to embody in visible form his inner world of romance, and lived more completely within the circle of his creations than any of his contemporaries. This poetical temperament has its perils, and might have driven a less healthy nature into injurious isolation and eccentricity. But, as a man of eminently sane mind and genial disposition, and fortified by the training of his early years, Scott had not to go out of the world, as it were, in order to "idealize realities." The common duties of life glowed into romance for him; his friends, Lowland and Highland, were dear not only in themselves, but as representatives of the two historical races of the land; his estate, when he bought one, was rather an enclosure of ancient associations, a park of poetry, if the phrase may be allowed, decorated with "a romance in stone and lime," than what the Lords of Harden and Bowhill would have looked on as landed property.

The picture here drawn, although different from the estimate often taken of Scott, rests upon the evidence of his writings, and of the copious materials contained in the Biography, and not only answers to what we read of his sentiments and mode of thought, conscious or unconscious, but can alone explain how he came to be the author of the poems and the novels. Mr Lockhart describes him as the finished man of the world. Mr Carlyle, again, seems to speak of him as, in the main, a manufacturer of hasty books for the purpose of making money and a landed estate to rival neighbouring country-gentlemen. Both views appear to be unintentionally unjust to Scott, and discordant with his recorded character; and both fail equally to explain how such imaginative writing as his in prose and verse had any room to come into being. Some great artists, we read, have enjoyed the possession of wealth. Others have been gratified by social position. But in what art has the love of money, or the love of rank, ever been the root of masterpieces? Who has moved the world with these levers? You cannot grow poetry without the poetical soil. If at first sight this be less visible in Scott than in men like Byron or Shelley, may not the reason be, not that the nature of the poet was absent, but that it was more closely and curiously combined with the man of

common life than to others? The writer, at least, desires to submit this view as the possible solution of a difficult problem.

Walter Scott, it will probably be agreed, ranks among the great of our race, both as a writer and as a man; but in his portrait, as in every true portrait, there are shadows. Some weakness is blended intimately with his strength; as we have noticed, he cannot escape "the weak side of his gifts." His wish was certainly to conceal his inner or poetical mind from the world. Perhaps he sometimes concealed it from himself. One fallacy hence arising (to return now to his commercial affairs), was an overestimate of his practical powers. "From beginning to end, he piqued himself on being a man of business." Against this it is probably enough to set the fact, that the books of his house were never fairly balanced till they were in the hands of his creditors. That the Ballantyne brothers had, each in his way, equally vague ideas on the matter, was known perfectly to Scott, who by 1812 found himself involved in his first difficulties. Then the vast success of the Novels once more floated the house: but although the partnership was enlarged by the admission of a really able commercial man, Constable the publisher, the reckless spirit which his adventurous nature brought with him, combined with the peculiar money difficulties of 1825, only hastened the concluding bankruptcy of 1826. These twenty years of business, unsound from the outset, have supplied materials for a long dispute, with whom the fault justly rested. But enough has been here stated to explain the general case; we need not go further into a matter of which, with even more than usual truth, one might say that both sides were honestly wrong, and all, partners in a catastrophe for which all were responsible. The so called *men of business and plain common-sense*, as we daily see, were not one atom more truly entitled to those epithets, than the romantic Poet. But,—what had the "Ariosto of the North" to do in concerns like this?

A probable element in the ultimate failure of the House of Ballantyne and Company was the fact that the partner with capital sedulously concealed himself from the public. The news that Scott was one of the firm startled the world far more than the news that he was the sole author of the "Waverley Novels." It is obvious in how many ways this concealment must have hampered business. One reason of it was a certain pleasure in mystery, inherent in Scott's nature, and displayed also when "*Triermain*" and "*Harold*" were published. The wish was, that both of these poems should be taken for the work of his friend Erskine. In case of the Novels, however, the desire to escape the nuisance of commonplace praise and free flattery was a further inducement. It was not so wise a motive that co-operated to prompt the commercial *incognito*. It might have been expected that he would have been led to avoid this by natural shrewdness, and "the thread of the attorney in him." But the peculiarity of Scott is that something dream-like and imaginative, together with something practical and prosaic, unites in all the more important phases of his life; past and present, romance and reality,

meet in him at once; he is in the world and not in it, as it were, at the same time; he is almost too unselfconscious. The favourable side of this strangely balanced nature has been already indicated; it gave us in his Poems and Novels together the most brilliant and the most diversified "spectacle of human life" which we have had since Shakespeare; it gave Scott himself many years of pure and peculiar happiness. On the other hand, we have the failure, after long-continued struggles, of his material prosperity, and (closely connected with this) the narrow and even unjust view which he always took, or rather, took always in public, of literature and his own share in it. He could not fully work out his ideal of life, however we interpret it; his career has many curious inconsistencies. There is nothing which Mr. Lockhart notes more pointedly than Scott's aversion from what is called "literature as a profession." He endorses with approval, as Scott's own view, the words of a friend, who wrote in 1799 to encourage him in perseverance at the bar, "I rather think men of business have produced as good poetry in their by-hours as the professed regulars." an assertion of which (it need hardly be added) the writer does not furnish any proof. To the same effect it is added (1815) "that Scott never considered any amount of literary distinction as entitled to be spoken of in the same breath with mastery in the higher departments of practical life. To have done things worthy to be written, was in his eyes a dignity to which no man made any approach, who had only written things worthy to be read," and the steam-engine, safety-lamp, and campaigns of the Duke of Wellington are presently named as examples.

There can be no doubt that the biographer has here truly reported, not merely what he admired Scott for thinking, but Scott's own conscious idea regarding his life. And if this had been the whole truth, there can equally be no doubt that we should never have had a "Marmion" or a "Bride of Lammermoor." Indeed, except as the opinion of so distinguished a man as Scott, it would hardly deserve examination. For what human being would seriously pretend to compare with each other things so generically different as a battle, a scientific invention, and a song? In what balances should we weigh "Othello" and Trafalgar, the commercial policy of Sir Robert Peel and "The Advancement of Learning,"—or decide which has been of most value to England? How is the one less a "deed" than the other? Scott's profound modesty as to his own genius was undoubtedly one motive in his estimate of literature, but even this could not have blinded so sensible a man to its untenability, had he not been swayed by something of that instinct for living an old-world life in the present, which lay at the root of his character. We have here one of his practical anachronisms. He puts himself in the place of the Minstrel of the "Lay" at Newark, he leans to the time when hands were more honoured, at least more powerful, than brains; he wavers in the delicate compromise which was to have *united* the spirit of Scott of Harden and Scott of Abbotsford. A similar sentiment governs his aversion from "literature as a pro-

lessons.' Much might be said for and against this feeling; yet it is hardly more true of Goldsmith, Southey, or Thackeray, that they made letters their profession, than of Walter Scott. Few men who would ever be properly classed as literature have written so much or so continuously; none, probably, have earned more by their writings. What he actually was as a man of business, meanwhile, is recorded in his Life. What he was as a lawyer has been described by himself. "My profession and I" (in 1800) "came to stand nearly upon the footing which honest Slender consoled himself on having established with Mistress Ann Page, *There was no great love between us at the beginning, and it pleased Heaven to decrease it on farther acquaintance.*" In fact, at the point where we left the narrative, Scott, already enriched by his marriage, was about to obtain the Sheriff-deputeship of Selkirkshire; and soon after (1806) he left the bar for a Clerkship of Session;—offices which together gave him a good income, and had the additional advantage of duties that, except a certain amount of attendance and of rapid and accurate penmanship, were almost nominal. The criticism to which these pleasant places seem to have exposed Scott from those who did not share in his political devotion to the house of Dundas, then paramount in Scotland, was unfair; but one cannot say that he is entitled to more than the praise of prudence for obtaining ease and leisure by this ancient and easy method:

Dove [illegible]!

And, in fact, before the salary from the clerkship, held at first in reversion, fell in, the sale of Scott's works was already beginning, both directly in itself and indirectly through his partnership with the Ballantynes, to surpass, as it before long reduced to comparative insignificance, any sources of revenue,—except those which he thus derived from the "profession of literature."

Enough, however, has been said on Scott's practical, though morally blameless, inconsistency in this section of his career. Important as the matter of income was for many years to his healthy enjoyment of existence, and at last in giving a direction to his writing, its real importance lies in that to which we gladly turn,—that he was thus enabled to live the life for which he had been planned by Nature. Is not what is most desirable for man contained in this, when "Nature's holy plan" happens to be such as she marked out for Scott? There are several types of a noble life, some of which may be loftier or more striking than his; yet we do not see how he could have done his peculiar work otherwise. One of the masters in the highest human knowledge,—the science of man's nature,—defined the perfection of life as "the serene exercise of thought" (we must thus paraphrase his own word *Theoria*), "in a state of independence, and leisure, and security so far as man may attain it, together with a complete measure of his days; for nothing incomplete can enter into blessedness. Such a life," he however adds, "would be in itself above the height of humanity." Perhaps Wordsworth

approached this ideal nearer than any distinguished man of Scott's generation, and it is easy to see the features in which Scott fell short, yet on the whole, if the estimate here taken be just, he also was not far from the lofty standard of Aristotle.

We return to trace Scott's career, fortunate, if we have truly and distinctly traced what manner of man he was, for it is only if we feel this, that Mr. Lockhart's detailed narrative of his life, the interest of which cannot be transferred to an abridgment, gains its fullest charm and significance Some contemporary poets now became friends of Scott, he had only seen Burns as a boy, and it is curious that, closely as their lines met in some points, Burns has left no sign of influence on Scott's writings A greater effect was produced by his intercourse with Wordsworth, whose elevation and simplicity of mind impressed Scott with a sense of his predominance, not the less striking because it was not consciously avowed The same tacit recognition is traceable in Byron; one seems also to find it among all Wordsworth's contemporaries in verse, they know that he is the head of the family "Differing from him in very many points of taste," writes Scott in 1820, "I do not know a man more to be venerated for uprightness of heart and loftiness of genius" Wordsworth, in turn, has recorded his estimate of Scott's power as a poet in some memorable verses, his feeling for the man in an early letter "Your sincere friend, for such I will call myself, though slow to use a word of such solemn meaning to any one." (ii 167)—Scott had for some years been Sheriff of Selkirkshire, and that he might live within the district he now (1804) moved to Ashestiel, a single house within the old Ettrick Forest, upon the banks of Tweed, not much above its junction with Yarrow. "The river itself is separated from the high bank on which the house stands only by a narrow meadow of the richest verdure Opposite, and all around, are the green hills The valley there is narrow, and the aspect in every direction is that of perfect pastoral repose." "Not equal in picturesque beauty to the banks of Clyde," says Scott himself, "but so sequestered, so simple, and so solitary, that it seems just to have beauty enough to delight its inhabitants" And again, as a crowning recommendation, he describes Ashestiel to his friend the distinguished antiquary, Mr G Ellis: "In the very centre of the ancient Reged," otherwise known as the Scoto-British realm of Strathclyde These passages are extracted, because the general descriptions apply also to the scenery of Abbotsford, except that the landscape is there wider, and more bare, and because they indicate one dominant motive in Scott's mind The presence of ancient national associations was precisely the point which determined his choice of property · the *genius loci* which, with an overpowering influence, bound him all his life to the Border, and led him there from Italy to die.

By this time, through study, the collection of traditions, experience of men high or low in rank, solitary thought and imaginative vision, almost all the materials on which Scott was to work were ready When the first fruits of this long preparation appeared in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" (1805), its success was not less surprising

Introductions to the "Lay" and "Marmion," and, less successfully, though even here with much grace, in "Triermain;" but they are not wrought up into a whole, they do not form an integral portion of the poem. On the other hand, the metrical descriptions of scenery, if not more picturesque and vivid than those of the romances, tell more forcibly, they also relieve the narrative, by allowing the writer's own thoughts and interests to touch our hearts: an expedient used by Scott with singular skill The "Edinburgh" of "Marmion" is a splendid example, but others are scattered through the less familiarly known poems, which, it is hoped, will in this edition find a fresh circle of readers, who are little likely to regret the study.

Scott's incompleteness of style, which is more injurious to poetry than to prose, his "careless glance and reckless rhyme," have been alleged by a great writer of our time as one reason why he is now less popular as a poet than he was in his own day, when from two to three thousand copies of his metrical romances were yearly sold Beside these faults, which are visible almost everywhere, the charge that he wants depth and penetrative insight, has been often brought. He does not "wrestle with the mystery of existence," it is said, he does not try to solve the problems of human life Scott, could he have foreseen this criticism, would probably not have been very careful to answer it He might have allowed its correctness, and said that one man might have this work to do, but his was another High and enduring pleasure, however conveyed, is the end of poetry "Othello" gives this by its profound display of tragic passion "Paradise Lost" gives it by its religious sublimity: "Childe Harold" by its meditative picturesqueness the "Lay" by its brilliant delineation of ancient life and manners These are but scanty samples of the vast range of poetry. In that house are many mansions All poets may be seers and teachers; but some teach directly, others by a less ostensible and larger process. Scott never lays bare the workings of his mind, like Goethe or Shelley, he does not draw out the moral of the landscape, like Wordsworth, rather, after the fashion of Homer and the writers of the ages before criticism, he presents a scene, and leaves it to work its own effect on the reader His most perfect and lovely poems, the short songs which occur scattered through the metrical or the prose narratives, are excellent instances He is the most unselfconscious of our modern poets; perhaps, of all our poets, the difference in this respect between him and his friends Byron and Wordsworth is like a difference of centuries If *they* give us the inner spirit of modern life, or of nature, enter into our perplexities, or probe our deeper passions, Scott has a dramatic faculty not less delightful and precious He hence attained eminent success in one of the rarest and most difficult aims of Poetry,—sustained vigour, clearness, and interest in narration If we reckon up the poets of the world, we may be surprised to find how very few (dramatists not included) have accomplished this, and may be hence led to estimate Scott's rank in his art more justly One looks through the English poetry of the first half of the century in vain, unless it be here and

[illegible] Keats, [illegible] power of [illegible] into other as that of Scott. His contemporary, Crabbe, excepted, [illegible] emotion. He paints men, when they [illegible] moved? [illegible] drew the [illegible] invert the fable. It would be easy to [illegible] between these men, each [illegible] in his own way; the picture of one could not be painted with the other's palette; all are first rate in their kind; and every reader can choose the style which [illegible] highest, [illegible] and most [illegible] pleasure.

It is, however, only by considering Scott in relation to his own age and the circumstances in which he found himself, that we can reach a full estimate of him as a poet. This mode of viewing a man, it is true, has been sometimes pressed too far. Genius is in one sense the child of its century, in another its father. Circumstances explain much; but they do not account for it. The individuality of the poet will always be the central point in him; there is an element in the soul incalculable to the most minute analysis of a man's surroundings. But much light is undoubtedly gained by examining them. Scott received early, as we have seen, his direction in literature. Coming at the close of an age of criticism, he inaugurated an age of revival and of creation. It has been already noticed that there was something of reaction in this. Love of the ballads of Scotland, of mediaeval legends, of German romantic poetry, had unconsciously impressed his style upon him before 1800. Already his passion was to describe wild and adventurous characters, to delineate the natural landscape, to seek the persons of his drama in feudal times or in the common life around him. The weighty satire of Dryden or Johnson, the cultivated world of Pope, the classical finish of Gray, although admired for their own merits, had no share in his heart of hearts. The friend of Dr Blacklock, the child of the Edinburgh of Hume and Adam Smith, he was a "born romantic" without knowing it. Beyond any one he is the discoverer or creator of the "modern style." How much is implied in this! . . . It is true that by 1805 two other great leaders had already begun their career. Coleridge's fragment of "Christabel" was known to Scott, and influenced him in the "Lay." Wordsworth had published some of the most charming of his lyrics. But these men had as yet produced little effect, and the new faith nowhere found fewer believers than in Edinburgh; where, partly through the reluctance of the ordinary mind to accept originality, in part through the intense conservatism of literature, poets who now rank among the glories of England were treated as heretics with idle condemnation. It was some time before Scott could raise himself above this atmosphere, and say of the leading critic of the time, "Our very ideas of what is poetry differ so widely, that we rarely talk upon these subjects. There is something in Mr Jeffrey's mode of reasoning that leads me greatly to doubt whether he really has any feeling of poetical genius." Few people are now likely to dispute this estimate; and no one did more to discredit the narrow criticism prevalent sixty years since than Scott. If Lord Macaulay's

opinion be correct, that Byron's poetry served to introduce and to popularize Wordsworth's, Scott's even more decidedly cleared the way for "Childe Harold" and the "Giaour." Indeed, much in Byron is modelled upon the older poet, to whom he always looked up with a respectful affection which makes one of the brightest spots in his own chequered story. "Of all men Scott is the most open, the most honourable, the most amiable"

With the proceeds of "Rokeby" Scott made himself master of a cottage then called Clarty Hole, but soon characteristically renamed Abbotsford, close to the Tweed, about midway between Melrose, Ashestiel, and Selkirk. Bare and essentially unimproveable is most of the land hereabout: Scott did something for it by planting,—the favourite outdoor employment of his middle life, yet to an English eye the trees have a poor, sad, nay (what from his work one did not expect), even a formal and unpicturesque, air, the wider views over the Border are rather desolate than impressive, there is neither the sweet "pastoral melancholy" of Yarrow, nor the verdure and richness of Melrose But to the inner eye of the poet this region displayed scenes more lovely than Sorrento, more romantic than Monte Rosa There was the Roman way to the ford by the house, the "Catrail" which had bounded

Reged wide
And fair Strath-Clyde;

the glen of Thomas the Rhymer, famous in fairy tradition, the haunted ruins of Boldside, the field of the battle of Melrose, the last great clan-fight of the Borders,—Melrose visible eastward, the Eildon Hills cleft into their picturesque serration by Michael Scott, south, Tweed flowing below the house and audible in it with its silver ripple . . Some ambition to found a line of "Scotts of Abbotsford," fated not to be fulfilled, even some fancy less worthy of a great mind, to be himself a lord of acres, may have influenced him when he laid out so much money and energy on the lands of Abbotsford, and on the endless antiquarian details of the house which he built there Yet many phrases in his writings, and, far more, what we know of Scott's nature through life, afford convincing proofs that the possessions he really and veritably sought for were these memories of the past these relics of that ancient Scotland for which he felt, "like a lover or a *child*," with a rare and noble passion Abbotsford, with its Gothic architecture,—tasteful and poetically-imagined, if, to our more trained eyes, imperfect in many particulars—its armour and stained glass and carved oak, its library of precious mediaeval lore, poetry and history, its museum of little things consecrated by great remembrances, to Scott was a place where actual life was beautified by the ideal of his imagination, a Waverley romance realized in stone, a castle of his waking dreams,—and held, also, as it proved, like those he sung of, rather by some fanciful and fairy tenure than by matter-of-fact possession The gray mass of Abbotsford, with its sombre plantations, is not more enriched and glorified in

Turner's lovely drawings, than the lordship of these barren acres was to Scott by the predominating poet within him.

In 1814 Scott was one of a cheerful company who coasted round Scotland in a yacht engaged upon lighthouse business, touching at the Hebrides, Orkneys, Western Isles, and north of Ireland. A pleasant journal records the incidents of this trip, saddened at the close by the death of a dear friend, the Duchess of Buccleuch. It is a curious point of likeness between Scott and Goethe that, both being poets eminently interested in seeing men, and cities, and wild nature, and both also personally independent, yet the journeys of both were remarkably limited. Goethe never saw London, Paris, or Vienna. Except a hasty trip in 1810, Scott made but this one visit to the North and West of Scotland, and hardly knew more of England than lay between Berwick and London. The world must have lost much by this; but it is possible that the poets were guided by a true instinct, and feared lest the amount and vividness of the impressions which would have poured in upon them might be overpowering to the free exercise of their genius.

With an exultation natural to him, Scott now witnessed the first fall of Napoleon. He also completed his valuable edition of Swift's works. But the year is most remarkable to his biographer through that event which marks the beginning of the third epoch in Scott's life,—the publication of "Waverley."

III

During the period here closed, powerful rivals in poetry had risen to divide the popularity of Scott. Byron had carried the manner of his tales into more passionate scenes of life. Crabbe had enlarged that gallery of human character which, if wanting in beauty, in originality and number stands alone amongst the poems of the time. The allegiance of those lovers of the inmost spirit of poetry who give the law to the next generation had been secured by Wordsworth. The brilliant dawn of Shelley was breaking on a yet unconscious world. Our modern school had passed the circle within which Scott had once been the chief magician. He felt this; and, never strictly a believer in his own powers, had already set himself to put into the prose form which suited it best some of the vast material which he had gathered; beginning with the last greatly romantic event in Scottish history. "Waverley," commenced in 1805 (whence the second title "Sixty Years Since"), taken up in 1810, was completed now, and published in July 1814. The last two volumes were written within three weeks of that summer of excitement, a fact of which Mr Lockhart tells a very striking anecdote (iv : 172,3). From motives already touched on, Scott carefully concealed the authorship; and although long before his name was announced (1827) little

doubt remained in the minds of intelligent men, this first novel wanted the impulse of his already acquired fame yet the blow went home, the success was immediate, and the writer had once more "found himself" in literature.

A few more dates will mark, in a general way, the course of the writer's genius in this field "Guy Mannering" appeared in 1815, "The Antiquary" and "Old Mortality" next year, "The Heart of Mid-Lothian," 1818, "Bride of Lammermoor" and "Ivanhoe," 1819, "Kenilworth" and "The Pirate," 1821, "St Ronan's Well," 1823; the "Fair Maid of Perth," 1828 These may be considered the typical works of the series, though there is hardly one which does not display the wonderful versatility of their author Take even the feeblest of the "Waverley Novels," when shall we see the like again, in this style of romance?—Goethe was accustomed to speak of Scott as the "greatest writer of his time," as unique and unequalled When asked to put his views on paper, he replied with the remark which he made also upon Shakespeare, Scott's art was so high, that it was hard to attempt giving a formal opinion on it But a few words may be added on the relation borne by the Novels to the author's character Putting aside those written in depressed spirits and failing health, the inequality of merit in the remainder appears almost exactly proportioned, not to their date, but to the degree in which they are founded on Scottish life during the century preceding 1771 In this leading characteristic they are the absolute reproduction of the writer's own habitual thoughts and interests. Once more, we find in them a practical compromise between past and present. We have had no writer whose own country was more completely his inspiration But he is inspired by the "ain countree" he had seen, or heard of from those who were old during his youth As he recedes from Scotland and from "sixty years since," his strength progressively declines. What we see as the series advances, are not so much signs that he had exhausted himself, as symptoms that he had exhausted the great situations of the century before his own birth, and "St Ronan's Well" remains the solitary proof that, had events encouraged Scott to throw himself frankly into contemporary life, he might (in the writer's judgment) have been first of the English novelists here, as he indisputably is in the romance of the past.

It has been observed that one of the curious contrasts which make up that complex creature, Walter Scott, is the strong attraction which drew him, as a Lowlander the born natural antagonist of the Gael, to the Highland people Looking back on the Celtic clans as we happily may, as a thing of the far past, softened by distance, coloured by the finest tints of poetry, and with that background of noble scenery which has afforded to many of us such pure and lofty pleasure, we cannot conceive without a painful effort that within a few years of Scott's own birth the Highlander had been to the Lowlander much what the Hindoo,—the Afghan or Mahratta at least,—is at present to the Englishman All that we admire in the Gael had been to the Scot proper the source of contempt and of repugnance Such a feeling is one of the worst instincts of human nature, it is an unmistakeable part of

the brute animal within us; more than any other cause, the hatred of race to race has hampered the progress of man. There is also no feeling which is more persistent and obstinate. But it has been entirely conquered in case of the Saxon and the Gael. Now this vast and salutary change in national opinion is directly due to Scott. Something of the kind might possibly have come with time; but he, in fact, was the man whose lot was to accomplish it. This may be regarded, on the whole, as his greatest achievement. He united the sympathies of two hostile races by the sheer force of genius. He healed the bitterness of centuries. Scott did much in idealising, as poetry should, the common life of his contemporaries. He equally did much in rendering the past history, and the history of other countries in which Scotchmen played a conspicuous part, real to us. But it is hardly a figure of speech to say, that he created the Celtic Highlands in the eyes of the whole civilised world.

If this be not first rate power, it may be asked where we are to find it. The admirable spirit and picturesqueness of Scott's poems and novels carry us along with them so rapidly, whilst at the same time the weaknesses and inequalities of his work are so borne upon the surface, that we do not always feel how unique they are in literature. Scott is often inaccurate in historical painting, and puts modern feeling into the past. He was not called upon, as we have noticed, to represent mental struggles, but the element of original thought is deficient in his creations. "Scott's," says an able critic, "is a healthy and genial world of reflection, but it wants the charm of delicate exactitude; we miss the consecrating power." (*National Review*, April, 1858.) He is altogether inferior to Miss Austen in describing the finer elements of the womanly nature; we rarely know how the heroine feels; the author paints love powerfully in its effects and its dominating influence; he does not lead us to "the inmost enchanted fountain" of the heart. In creating types of actual human life Scott is perhaps surpassed by Crabbe; he does not analyse character, or delineate it in its depths, but exhibits the man rather by speech and action; he is "extensive" rather than "intensive;" has more of Chaucer in him than of Goethe; yet, if we look at the variety and richness of his gallery, at his command over pathos and terror, the laughter and the tears, at the many large interests beside those of romance which he realizes to us, at the way in which he paints the whole life of men, not their humours or passions alone, at his unfailing wholesomeness and freshness, like the sea and air and great elementary forces of Nature, it may be pronounced a just estimate which,—without trying to measure the space which separates these stars,—places Scott second in our creative or imaginative literature to Shakespeare. "All is great in the Waverley Novels," said Goethe in 1831, "material, effect, characters, execution." Astronomers tell us that there are no fixed points in the heavens, and that earth and sun momentarily shift their bearings. An analogous displacement may be preparing for the loftiest glories of the human

intellect, Homer may become dim, and Shakespeare too distant. Perhaps the same fate is destined for Scott. But it would be idle to speculate on this, or try to predict the time when men will no longer be impressed by the vividness of "Waverley," or the pathos of "Lammermoor."

The leading idea of this sketch of Scott's character is, that, under the disguise of worldly sense and shrewdness, the poetical nature predominated in his life. In regard to his conduct and career, this point has perhaps been sufficiently illustrated. Looking at him now as an imaginative writer, from many causes, amongst which modesty and pride played an equal part, he has told us little of his own mind. Compared with Byron's (see the correspondence between them,—iii: 394), Scott's letters are superficial, until misfortune unveiled him to himself, there are no "Confessions" in his journal. Then we find, what discerning friends had long noticed, that the strong man had carried with him through life the sensitiveness of his childhood. One, to whose papers in *Fraser's Magazine* (1835-6) this sketch is indebted for some observations not found elsewhere, remarks that Scott was often subject to fits of abstraction, when he would be so completely absorbed in thick-coming fancies, that he became unconscious where he was, or what he was writing. Scott's stern repression and strong wish to do before the world only what the world does, render these points at once more hard to trace, and more significant. The emotion of such a character is deep in proportion to the resistance which it meets from the other elements. The fervour which melted Scott would have consumed a less powerful nature. When among scenes of wild Nature he was so rapt and excited that his friends felt it the wisest and kindest thing "to leave him to himself" (iv: 181). This was in the height of his vigour and assumed stoicism. Later on, but some time before decline had seized him, he writes, "The beauty of the evening, the sighing of the summer breeze, bring the tears into my eyes not unpleasantly." or again, "I spent the day wandering from place to place in the woods, idly stirred by the succession of a thousand vague thoughts and fears, the gay strangely mingled with those of dismal melancholy; tears which seemed ready to flow unbidden; smiles which approached to those of insanity." And then he adds, "I scribbled some verses, or rather, composed them in my memory." If the one eminent English critic who has expressed a formal judgment upon Scott as a writer, had not insisted chiefly upon the rapidity of his writings, treating them as superficial and transient in interest, it would have been unnecessary to dwell upon this point; it really is no more than that imagination is never displayed but by a man of imaginative mind, that poetry can be written only by a poet. But even the charge of over-haste appears to be pressed by Mr Carlyle too far. Scott's idea of poetical style, it must be allowed, errs upon the side of spontaneous impulse; he would rather be unfinished than overfinished, preferred vigour to refinement, and aimed at the qualities he admired in Dryden, "perpetual animation and elasticity of thought;" did not make the most of his admirable materials; atoned for the random and the reckless

by picturesqueness and movement. But there is nothing to be atoned for in perfect work; "incompleteness cannot enter into it;" the rival forces, as in Nature, balance each other. In a word, Scott's was the Gothic mind throughout, not the Greek; he wants that indefinable air of distinction which even the lesser ancient authors have; no writer of such power has furnished fewer quotations; "he used the first sufficient words which came uppermost;" he does not bring his idea to a consummate expression, such as incorporates itself within the memory; thought and the phrase, matter and spirit, rarely seem to form one indivisible whole. It is in this quarter that he is perhaps most in danger from the hand of Time. To say that such was Scott's nature, and that he did best to follow it, whether in his genius or in his life, would be to assume that he was incapable of the peculiar attribute of genius, its capacity for improvement. Yet we must not conclude that his writing cost him little; it should be remembered that he hardly touched original work till he was of mature age, and had collected vast stores; he is like the musician who plays the most difficult piece at sight, as the reward and the result of years of practice. "What infinite diligence in the preparatory studies; what truth of detail in the execution," said Goethe. The speed with which Scott actually composed, in fact, consumed him; the fire of heaven destroyed the conductor. When we read that "Guy Mannering" was completed within six weeks, we may say, "These things were his paralysis." Nothing came to Scott "in his sleep." "I will avoid," he says, in one of the few letters where he speaks out, "any occupation so laborious and agitating, as poetry must be to be worth anything." (vi. 400.)

The one of all Scott's writings which has the highest qualities of pathos and of unity,—the one which, on the whole, may be called his greatest and most poetical, affords the clearest example of what this essay aims most at proving, the dominant intensity of the imaginative element in Scott. He dictated the "Bride of Lammermoor" while recovering from very severe illness (1819): but on regaining health, "when it was first put into his hands in a complete form, he did not recollect one single incident, character, or conversation it contained." Of all that we know about Scott, this incident is the most remarkable, especially if we recall the conspicuous sanity of his temperament; it casts the deepest light upon his nature; it shows how, when he wrote most powerfully, he was so inspired and penetrated by his subject that it flowed from him as if by a kind of rapture or possession; it makes one ready to say that, when least himself, he was most himself.

But many pages might be given to the criticism of Scott as a writer. It is time that we should resume his life, and try to complete the picture of his character. Scott had once or twice visited London in his earlier days, when he was known mainly as an antiquarian; in *1815* he was received there "with all the honours." "Waverley," everywhere recognized as his, put him at the head of our imaginative prose; as a poet, he was second in popularity to Byron alone. Byron's boyish

attack upon him in the "English Bards" had been long forgotten, forgiveness it had never needed from the exquisite sweetness of Scott's temper, who had laughed, praised the writer's power, and added only, "spleen and gall are disastrous materials to work with for any length of time." These two great men now met, each with equal esteem for the gifts of the other, and Scott sought Byron's friendship with that alacrity of warm admiration for force of mind and character which marks him through life, and is one of the surest signs of genius Soon after came the final "Hundred Days" of Napoleon, Scott was among the first to visit the scenes of the campaign, and he found at Paris,—then a city representative of everything except France,—a renewal of his English popularity from the politicians and soldiers of the "allied armies" Some animated letters, and an Ode on Waterloo (not equal to the occasion), were the fruit of this journey. Now followed several years of a splendid, and, on the whole, a singularly well-enjoyed prosperity. "What series," says Mr Carlyle, "followed out of *Waverley*, and how and with what result, is known to all men, was witnessed and watched with a kind of rapt astonishment by all Walter Scott became Sir Walter Scott, Baronet, of Abbotsford (1820), on whom Fortune seemed to pour her whole cornucopia of wealth, honour, and worldly good, the favourite of Princes and of Peasants, and all intermediate men" That there was another and a more poetical side to the "wealth and worldly good" in Scott's mind has been already noticed, Abbotsford, with its relics and historical territory, its visitors from all lands, including many of the best of his contemporaries, its happy life among friends of equal age, and children fast growing up to be friends (two sons and two daughters), and healthy pleasures in forest and moor, and now at last, full enjoyment of the creative power, "the vision and the faculty divine,"—was a realized romance to Scott, the past living again in the present, common existence enriched and beautified by poetry Mr Lockhart here gives several pleasing and brilliant pictures of his father-in-law's life in town and country; a day at Abbotsford and a dinner at Ballantyne's are hardly inferior to scenes in the "Antiquary" or "Rob Roy" in vividness

These descriptions would suffer by abridgment, in place of them, let us try and form some image of the man The first impression seems to have been that of a stalwart Liddesdale farmer, shrewd and quiet; the figure of good height, the forehead lofty, though not to the exaggerated measure of the bust; complexion ruddy, features massive, and inclining to heaviness. When he spoke, this rather inanimate air kindled into brilliant life in his eye and mouth, equally capable of expressing humour or pathos, and produced a greater effect by the force of contrast The mutability of his features is noted throughout his life, and must have tried beyond their powers the artists who attempted his portrait. Whether through the early fever and its lameness, or some excess in field-sports and genial living, or the corrosion of a mind that never left him at leisure to "do nothing," or through all causes combined, when little over fifty he had already the look of a

"gallant old gentleman," and the sense of premature old age is written on every leaf of his later journals. "*I think I shall not live to the usual verge of human existence; I shall never see the threescore and ten.*" Yet Scott preserved the spirit of his youth, and to the last was characteristically unwilling to allow himself beaten, even in climbing a slope without assistance. In these external details one reads the man; Scott, with his many contrasts and subtleties of disposition, was eminently made "all of a piece." This harmony of nature was not less shown in his conversation, which left the sense of quiet power, inexhaustible variety of anecdote, study of human character, and wealth of the well-stored memory, rather than of brilliancy. "He did not affect sayings, the points and terse turns, which are easily caught up, were not natural to him. The great charm of his table talk was in the sweetness and *abandon* with which it flowed, always guided by good sense and taste; the warm and unstudied eloquence with which he expressed rather sentiments than opinions; and the liveliness and force with which he narrated and described." Abbotsford was a centre of life and society in its brightest, most enjoyable, and most cultivated form, unique in England, and which unhappily has never found a rival. No house, except it were Voltaire's at Ferney, is reputed to have been equally thronged. Scott's hospitality and kindliness were unlimited; he had the open nature which is the most charming of all charms; was wholly free from the folly of fastidiousness, *had* real dignity, and hence never "stood upon it," talked to all he met, and lived as friend with friend among his servants and followers. "Sir Walter speaks to every man," one of them said, "as if they were blood relations." Let us complete the picture in his own words; they give us the two contrasting sides of his character. "Few men have enjoyed society more, or been *bored*, as it is called, less, by the company of tiresome people. I have rarely, if ever, found any one, out of whom I could not extract amusement or edification. Still, however, from the earliest time I can remember, I preferred the pleasure of being alone to wishing for visitors."—Need it be added that he was fond of the company of youth, and delighted as a mother in his children's presence? The letters to his eldest son's young wife are the most attractive and graceful in the series.

Our sketch, inevitably incomplete, must not be concluded without some note of Scott's taste and feeling towards literature. This, says Mr. Lockhart, "engrossed the greater part of his interest and reflection." Beside his original works, and the voluminous editions of Swift and Dryden, Scott edited or superintended as many reprints as would have made the fame of an ordinary antiquarian. His own taste evidently led him by preference to our older poets. With Shakespeare his novels show a close familiarity. Scott's admiration for Dryden is expressed in the Life prefixed to his edition; that which he felt for Johnson's two "Satires" was little inferior. He deplores, in mature life, his ignorance of the Greek literature; of the Latin he had no intimate knowledge; nor does his early interest in Goethe, "my old master,"

appear to have been followed by the appreciation of those works compared with which "Goetz" was but crude and feeble Dante, who represents rather the Roman than the Gothic mediaevalism, he did not admire, finding him "obscure and difficult," and remaining even seemingly ignorant till the year of his death that his own ancestor, Michael Scott, had found a place far down in Hell, where he is lodged by Dante in company of Amphiaraus, Teiresias, and other reputed sorcerers In obedience not only to his own taste, but to a traditional fame now greatly faded, Scott was in the habit of reading through the "Orlando" of Ariosto yearly The judgments preserved on modern English poetry are few and uncritical. In an undated conversation he spoke of himself and of Campbell as much inferior to Burns; and ranked Miss Joanna Baillie far above each He even couples her with Shakespeare in one of the "Introductions" to Marmion But Scott's impressions flustuated. Thus he knew no man (1820) "more to be venerated" than Wordsworth for "loftiness of genius " again, he "always reckoned Burns and Byron the most genuine poetical geniuses of my time, and half a century before me " (1826)—an opinion founded on that predominance of the impulsive character in them, which was the inspiration of his own poetry On the other hand, Scott more than once expresses deep admiration for Miss Austen, the most unlike himself in style, if second only to him in genius, among all the novelists of the time "This young lady had a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life, which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with"

After "Ivanhoe," published 1819, the sale of Scott's novels in some degree declined a fact of which his partners in commerce never informed him To this reticence, ultimately as unwise for themselves as for him, the negligences which grew upon Scott as a writer may be partly due But to all eyes he increased in fame and wealth; was caressed and courted as kings have seldom been, but without any taint to the simplicity and beauty of his nature; and reached perhaps the height of his visible popularity with his fellow-creatures on his triumphal progress through Ireland in 1825 —This was a year dark with panic and commercial ruin, Scott's firm, which had been always insecure and carelessly conducted, soon felt the shock The poet, perhaps the least unbusinesslike member of the house, must have gradually withdrawn from active superintendence, and the clearest knowledge he ever obtained of his own affairs was when his bankruptcy, early in 1826, had been declared The trying circumstances of the *time* stood for much in this failure, and Scott might have accepted it without discredit but the shock roused all the determination in one of the most determined of men, and he resolved to pay the debt in full, and save by his own single-handed exertions what might be saved of his beloved Abbotsford for his family "Scott's heart clung to the place he had created *There is scarce a tree on it that does not owe its being to me*" His creditors consented; and the "Life of Napoleon," with the last volumes of the "Waverley" series, were among the results of this decision

Hitherto something had been left to complete Scott's character. He had still to prove his complete fidelity to his vocation in literature. He had to give the far more arduous proof that he could bear evil fortune in exchange for unusual good. We cannot choose the date of our own trials. Scott's came upon him, not as with most men of genius, at their first experience of life, during the strength of youth, but after years of romantic success, and when the approaches of mortal disease had already enfeebled the powers of endurance. In the eye of the world,—perhaps in the eye of the philosopher,—it might have been the wiser part to let things take their course, submit, and decline a struggle of no doubtful issue to his own health and life. But, if these pages present a true picture, all this was simply impossible to Scott. It would have been to break with what lay deepest and broadest in him,—the nature of the poet. Accepting then his decision as that which alone he could adopt, the record of these later years, as told by Mr. Lockhart, and illustrated by Scott's journal, gives to his character the completeness of poetical unity. It is the fifth act in the drama of his life; it displays how the hero met the catastrophe, and overcame it, and rested at last from his labours. The words of an aged uncle, who did not live to see the evil day, were never more completely borne out than now: "God bless thee, Walter, my man! Thou hast risen to be great, but thou wast always good!" It must have been with no little effort that he reappeared in the capital of which he had for many years been beyond comparison the most distinguished inhabitant. "I went to the Court for the first time to-day," Jan. 24, 1826, "and, like the man with the large nose, thought everybody was thinking of me and my mishaps. Most were, undoubtedly, and all rather regrettingly; some obviously affected." Though deeply moved by the sympathy shown with him, he did not hold up his head until some pamphlets which he published upon a Scottish commercial question had succeeded. Then he writes, "People will not dare talk of me as an object of pity;—no more *poor manning*." But adversity now came in no measured proportions; the cup was filled, and ran over. Poverty was not the only or the worst evil of the year. One son was absent in the army, the second for his education; the care of a sickly and much loved grandchild detained the eldest daughter; and Scott, leaving his wife ill beyond hope at Abbotsford, was compelled to set himself to solitary labour within a narrow lodging at Edinburgh. Soon a few pages in his journal, fearful in the pathetic struggle which they betray, tell us of the irremediable loss. Yet throughout the whole Scott maintains that noble and submissive courage with which, years before the time of calamity, he had looked forward to the unseen future; whatever pain or misfortune might be in store, "I am already a sufficient debtor to the bounty of Providence to be resigned to it."

This resignation bore its fruits: and a kind of after summer of mild and peaceful radiance,—cheered by the fidelity of friends and the love of children, relieves the bodily infirmities and painful task-work of Scott's old age. At this time occurred

an interchange of interesting letters between him and Goethe. Scott gives a characteristic sketch of his own position. "My eldest son has a troop of Hussars, my youngest has just been made Bachelor of Arts at Oxford. God having been pleased to deprive me of their mother, my youngest daughter keeps my household in order, my eldest being married," to Mr. Lockhart, "and having a family of her own. Such are the domestic circumstances of the person you so kindly enquired after: for the rest, I have enough to live on in the way I like, notwithstanding some very heavy losses: and I have a stately antique château (modern antique), to which any friend of Baron von Goethe will be at all times most welcome, with an entrance-hall filled with armour, which might have become Jaxthausen," the castle in Goethe's *Goetz*, "itself, and a gigantic bloodhound to guard the entrance."

After a visit to London, where he was received by the best men of the time with affectionate respect, and a short excursion to Paris, he completed the "Life of Napoleon" in 1827. A crowd of other volumes followed this massive work, amongst which the "Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft" (1830), written under the pressure of imminent illness, are only sufficient to give an idea how that curious subject, for which he had made large preparations, would have been treated by Scott in his better days. There was much in him of Michael Scott, the magician, much also of Reginald Scott, the courageous advocate of reason and humanity in a superstitious age. Half shrewdness, half or more than half belief, —the poise of his mind between the romantic and the critical, eminently fitted him to write impressively on witchcraft and ghostly legends. Perhaps no single point is managed with more supreme skill in the "Novels." Let us add that, beside all these labours, his warm liberality of heart led him to give others freely that assistance with his pen which his purse could no longer supply. Already he had cleared off a vast load of debt, when Nature, on whom, between physical and mental exertion, he had pressed hard since youth, avenged herself by serious strokes of paralysis in 1830 and 1831. "Such a shaking hands with Death," he said, "is formidable." Scott resigned his legal office; but it was in vain that those about him tried to enforce the quiet of mind which was essential to *Euthanasia*, if not to life. No longer master of the creative imagination, the power which had long obeyed his bidding now compelled him as a slave; and do what his friends could to restrain him, more than one of the novels was produced within these months of decay. At length he was persuaded to try the southern climate. A final gleam of the Scott of younger years broke forth for one moment when Wordsworth came (Sept. 22, 1831) to bid him farewell. For the last time the two great poets who, while following the different paths which led both to masterworks, appreciated each other with the deep sympathy of genius, together traversed the vale of Yarrow. This day was commemorated by Wordsworth in one of the finest occasional poems in our language. A serene beauty characterizes the *Yarrow Revisited*. Perhaps Words-

THE

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL:

A POEM

IN SIX CANTOS

Dum relego, scripsisse pudet; quia plurima cerno,
Me quoque, qui feci, judice, digna lini.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES, EARL OF DALKEITH,

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The Poem now offered to the Public, is intended to illustrate the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland The inhabitants, living in a state partly pastoral and partly warlike, and combining habits of constant depredation with the influence of a rude spirit of chivalry, were often engaged in scenes highly susceptible of poetical ornament As the description of scenery and manners was more the object of the Author than a combined and regular narrative, the plan of the Ancient Metrical Romance was adopted, which allows greater latitude, in this respect, than would be consistent with the dignity of a regular Poem The same model offered other facilities, as it permits an occasional alteration of measure, which, in some degree, authorises the change of rhythm in the text The machinery, also, adopted from popular belief, would have seemed puerile in a Poem which did not partake of the rudeness of the old Ballad, or Metrical Romance.

For these reasons, the Poem was put into the mouth of an ancient Minstrel, the last of the race, who, as he is supposed to have survived the Revolution, might have caught somewhat of the refinement of modern poetry, without losing the simplicity of his original model The date of the Tale itself is about the middle of the sixteenth century, when most of the personages actually flourished The time occupied in the action is Three Nights and Three Days

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

A PECULIAR interest attaches to "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," not only as the first disclosure of the poet's powers, but as that, among all his works, which is perhaps most closely identified with his personal career and character. Even if Scott had not himself told us, it would not be difficult to trace the various influences under which he composed this poem. His grandmother, in whose youth the Border raids were still matters of comparatively recent tradition, used to amuse him with many a tale of Watt of Harden, Wight Willie of Aikwood, Jamie Telfer of the fair Dodhead, and other Moss-trooping heroes. This prepared his mind for the deep impression which was made on it, when he was about twelve years old, by Percy's "Reliques of Ancient Poetry." It was under a large platanus tree in his aunt's garden at Kelso that he first read them, forgetting even the dinner hour in his enjoyment of this new treasure. "To read and to remember was in this instance," he says, "the same thing, and henceforth I overwhelmed my schoolfellows, and all who would hearken to me, with tragical recitations from the ballads of Bishop Percy. The first time, too, I could scrape a few shillings together, which were not common occurrences with me, I bought unto myself a copy of these beloved volumes; nor do I believe I ever read a book half so frequently, or with half the enthusiasm."

In the compilation of his own Border Minstrelsy he followed the impulse thus derived; and when, after having for some years dabbled in poetry, he aspired to distinguish himself by something higher than mere translations or occasional verses, his partiality for the Border legends governed his choice of a subject as well as the style of treatment. He hesitated for a while as to the particular story he should illustrate, but all those he thought of belonged to the same class. At one time he contemplated "a Border ballad, in the comic manner," founded on his ancestor's (Sir William Scott, of Harden) marriage with ugly Meg Murray, as the alternative of being hanged by his father-in-law. But finally he decided on "a romance of Border chivalry, in a light-horseman sort of stanza." Having, at the request of the Countess of Dalkeith, undertaken a ballad about the adventures of a brownie or goblin, called Gilpin Horner, he was discouraged in the attempt by the apparent coldness with which his two friends, Erskine and Cranstoun, listened to the first stanzas, and abandoned the idea till tempted to resume it by learning that, on second thoughts, his critics had formed a more favourable opinion of the effort. He applied himself to the work as an amusement during his enforced leisure, when disabled by the kick of a horse at yeomanry drill on Portobello Sands. As soon as he got into the vein, he dashed it off at the rate of about a canto a week. The goblin page sank into a mere minor feature as the poem grew upon his hands. The metre was borrowed from Coleridge's "Lady Christabel." The beautiful freedom and variety of this metre Scott appreciated all the more, because it enabled him to introduce much of the style and phraseology of the old minstrels. The ballad measure in quatrains, which

at first naturally suggested itself, was set aside as too hackneyed and wearisome for a composition of any length. Against the measured short line, or octo-syllabic verse, there was the objection of the "fatal facility," to use Scott's own phrase, with which it was written, the temptation it offered to mere verbiage, and its monotonous and namby-pamby effect. Shakespeare had laughed at it as the "butter-woman's rate to market," and the "very false gallop of verses," and Scott felt that his muse demanded a more stirring and varied measure. "Christabel" was not published till 1816, but a year or two before Scott began the "Lay" he had heard Sir John Stoddart recite some parts of it, which made a deep impression on his mind. He saw that Coleridge had remedied all the defects of the octo-syllabic measure, by freeing it from its rigid formality, and dividing it by time instead of syllables; by the beat of four, as Leigh Hunt remarks, into which you might get as many syllables as you could, instead of allotting eight syllables to the poor time, whatever it might have to say, varying it further with alternate rhymes and stanzas, with rests and omissions, precisely analogous to those in music. The old bard himself was an afterthought. He was introduced as a sort of "pitch-pipe" to indicate the tone and character of the composition.

In the poem the reader will find a romantic picture of the Borderers, in the best aspect of their character. Their name, like that of the kindred rovers of the sea, is "linked with one virtue and a thousand crimes." Scott has brought out the solitary virtue—dauntless bravery—into the foreground, and has thrown the crimes into the shade. Here we may offer some prosaic observations on their real character. At first national feuds lent a justification to the Border raids. It was in the spirit of patriotism that the men on each side of the Cheviots harried one another's homes, and drove off one another's cattle. The instinct of hostility survived long after the two countries were at peace, and was quickened by the love of plunder. At the period of the following tale, they had degenerated into mere robbers, whom the rulers on both sides of the Border alike denounced. The best that can be said for them is that they had inherited the traditions of rapine which they sought to perpetuate, that what philosophers now call the doctrine of "continuity" was responsible for much of their wild temper; and that the savage habits which had been transmitted through generations were not readily uprooted:—

> "There never was a time on the March partes,
> Sen the Douglas and the Percy met,
> But yt was marvell yt the redde blude roune not
> As the raine does in the street."

Nursed with such a lullaby, it seemed to these wild Borderers only a law of nature that Scots and English should prey upon each other, and this ferocious spirit soon expanded into an impartial appetite for plunder, and general antagonism to society. And so it came about that a Scott learned to have as little compunction in "lighting to bed" a Kerr as a Græme. They had their own domestic raids and blood-feuds or disputes, as over the Border. It was, in truth, a restless, cruel, wild-beast kind of existence, that called forth all the worst passions, and could have been bearable only through a brutish insensibility and indifference to danger. They carried their life in their hands, and none could tell whether to a week's end he could call his kine his own. "They are like to Job," says Fuller, quaintly, "not in piety and patience, but in sudden plenty and poverty, sometimes having flocks and herds in the morning, none at night, and perchance many again next day." It was with some surprise, in the midst of vexation, that Watt Tinlinn reflected that his little lonely tower had not been

herried for a year and more, and the old song tells the common experience for which every borderer had to be prepared —

> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> My gear's a' gane

Religion, of course, in any true sense of the term, was hardly to be looked for in such a class. "They come to church," says Fuller, "as seldom as the 29th of February comes into the calendar." Yet they were not without their superstitions, and, however wanting in real piety, could patter an Ave Maria and finger their beads as they rode to a plundering foray. Their sense of honour could hardly have been very strong, and was certainly exceptional. But they had, at least, a sense of the sacredness of hospitality, and the protection which a host owes to his guest. Even the author of the "Worthies" owns that "indeed, if they promise safely to conduct a traveller, they will perform it with the fidelity of a Turkish Janizary; otherwise, woe be to him that falleth into their quarters." "They are," he adds, "a nest of hornets; strike one, and stir all of them about your ears. . . . Yet these Moss-troopers, if possibly they could procure the pardon for a condemned person of their company, would advance great sums out of their common stock, who, in such a case, cast in their lots amongst themselves, and all have one purse." So that, in spite of their domestic differences, there was a sort of union amongst them. The term Moss-troopers is evidently derived from the mosses among which they lived, and the companies in which they went about harrying. It was owing mainly to the vigorous measures of Belted Will, Earl of Carlisle, that the raiders were put down. The last public mention of Moss-troopers occurs during the civil wars of the 17th century, when many ordinances of Parliament were directed against them.

The region in which the scene of the poem is laid was as familiar and dear to Scott as the legends with which it is associated. His first consciousness of existence dated, as he himself has told us, from Sandy Knowe. In early manhood a "raid" into Liddesdale was the favourite object of a vacation ramble. At Ashestiel he spent the first happy years of wedlock; in Abbotsford he sought to realise one of the great ambitions of his life; and Dryburgh incloses his remains. The Border Union Railway now traverses the district from Carlisle to Hawick, and modern cultivation has somewhat softened and enriched the aspect of the landscape. The old peels and Border strongholds have been gradually crumbling away. Hawick, Selkirk, and Galashiels have risen into populous and flourishing towns, the seats of an important industry. Agriculture, though still chiefly pastoral, has encroached on many a hill-side, bogs have been drained, and coal-fields opened up. The mockery of the line—

> "Rich was the soil had purple heath been grain"

has lost most of its force, and the farmers of Liddesdale can now give a better account of their lands than the gudeman of Charlieshope—"There's mair hares than sheep on my farm; and for the moor-fowl and the grey-fowl, they lie as thick as doos in a doocot." But in Scott's time the country was much the same as in the days of the Moss-troopers. The people had outlived the old Border traditions of raids and robberies, yet in the seclusion of their valleys they preserved many of the rough reckless manners of their ancestors. Scott has painted them, in "Guy Mannering," much as they lived under his own eyes

The wildness of the region, even at the end of the last century, may be gathered from the incidents of one of the poet's raids His gig was the first wheeled carriage that had ever been seen in Liddesdale. There was no inn or public-house of any kind in the whole valley, which was accessible only through a succession of tremendous morasses. "In the course of our grand tour, besides the risks of swamping and breaking our necks, we encountered the formidable hardships of sleeping upon peat-stacks, and eating mutton slain by no common butcher, but deprived of life by the judgment of God, as a coroner's inquest would express themselves" Scott used to boast of being sheriff of the "cairn and the scaur," and that he had strolled through the wild glens of Liddesdale "so often and so long, that he might say he had a home in every farmhouse"

The scenery of the Scottish borderland can lay claim to little grandeur The hills are too bare to be beautiful, and too low to be very impressive Still the wide tracts of black moss, the grey swells of moor rising into brown, round-backed hills, with here and there a stately cliff of sterner aspect, and the green pastures of the quiet glens, are not without their charm, in spite of the general bare and treeless character of the landscape, which is at first apt to disappoint the visitor from the South. Washington Irving spoke of this disappointment to his host at Abbotsford "Scott hummed for a moment to himself, and looked grave. 'It may be pertinacity,' he said at length; 'but to my eye, these grey hills and all this wild Border country have beauties peculiar to themselves I like the very nakedness of the land, it has something bold, stern, and solitary about it When I have been for some time in the rich scenery about Edinburgh which is like ornamented garden land, I begin to wish myself back again among my own honest grey hills, and if I did not see the heather at least once a year, *I think I should die!*' The last words were said with an honest warmth, accompanied by a thump on the ground with his staff, by way of emphasis, that showed his heart was in his speech." That Scott was quite sensible to the sort of melancholy awe inspired by some of the more savage parts of the country is shown (if other proof were not abundant in his poems and novels) in a passage in one of his letters Speaking of the view from the top of Minchmoor, he says —"I assure you I have felt really oppressed with a sort of fearful loneliness when looking around the naked towering ridges of desolate barrenness which is all the eye takes in from the top of such a mountain, the patches of cultivation being hidden in the little glens, or only appearing to make one feel how feeble and ineffectual man has been to contend with the genius of the soil It is in such a scene that the unknown and gifted author of 'Albania' places the superstition which consists in hearing the noise of a 'chase, the baying of the hounds, the throttling sobs of the deer, the wild halloos of the huntsmen, and the

"'Hoof thick beating on the hollow hill'

I have often repeated his verses with some sensations of awe in this place" As far as his own estate was concerned, he did much by his plantations to cover the nakedness of the land, and his precept and example also helped to make planting fashionable among his neighbours

Of Scott's power of word-painting there is, no doubt, more abundant and striking evidence in his later poems; but the descriptions of natural scenery in the "Lay" are not only very effective, but illustrate that peculiar perception of colour rather than form which has been pointed out in the very suggestive criticism of Mr Ruskin in the "Modern Painters" Analysing the description of Edinburgh, in "Marmion," he shows there is hardly any form, only smoke and colour in the picture "Observe," he says, "the only hints at form given throughout are in

the same but vague words, 'ridgy, massy, close, and lush,' the whole being still more obscured by modern mystery, in its most tangible form of smoke. But the colours are all definite; note the rainbow band of them—gloomy or dusky red, sable (pure black), amethyst (pure purple), green and gold—in a noble chord throughout." Elsewhere Mr Ruskin says, "In consequence of his unselfishness and humility, Scott's enjoyment of Nature is incomparably greater than any other poet I know. All the rest carry their cares to her, and begin murmuring in her ears about their own affairs. But with Scott the love is entirely humble and unselfish. 'I, Scott, am nothing, and less than nothing; but these crags, and heaths, and clouds, how great are they, how lovely, how for ever to be beloved, only for their own silent thoughtless sake!'"

Without attempting any detailed topographical illustration of the poem, it may be worth while to notice some of the spots of chief interest which are referred to. Newark Castle, where the old minstrel is supposed to chant his tale before the duchess, stands in ruins in its "birchen bower" on the right bank of the Yarrow—a large square tower, dismantled and unroofed, with crumbling outer wall and turrets. It was built by James II for a hunting seat, afterwards belonged to the outlaw Murray, and has long been a possession, as it still is, of the house of Buccleuch. Newark Castle, where the imaginary minstrel poured forth his song, is included within the grounds of Bowhill, the favourite seat of another fair duchess, at whose request, when Countess of Dalkeith, Scott commenced the poem which developed into the Lay. He accordingly, says Lockhart, "shadows out his own beautiful friend in the person of her lord's ancestor, the last of the original stock of that great house; himself, the favoured inmate of Bowhill, introduced certainly to the familiarity of that circle by his devotion to the poetry of a by-past age, in that of an aged minstrel seeking shelter at the gate of Newark." This is the point of many arch allusions in the poem. There is also a personal interest in the closing lines, which refer, it is believed, to the day-dream of Ashestiel—the purchase of a modest mountain farm in that neighbourhood: "a hundred acres, two spare bed rooms, with dressing-rooms, each of which will on a pinch have a couch-bed"—a dream which afterwards grew into the ambitious scheme of Abbotsford. Lockhart deems it, in one point of view, the greatest misfortune of Scott's life that the original vision was not realized; but "the success of the poem itself 'changed the spirit of his dream.'" Ashestiel, where the Lay was partly written, lies at the foot of Minchmoor, on the right bank of the Tweed.

Branksome Tower still overlooks the Langholm Road, on the left bank of the Teviot, between two and three miles above Hawick. Various alterations have gradually reduced the dimensions of the building, and one square tower of massive thickness is the only part of the original structure which now remains. In the rest of the edifice the castellated style has been abandoned, and the old stronghold presents, with the exception of the towers referred to, the appearance of a handsome modern mansion. The extent of the old castle can still, however, be traced by some vestiges of its foundation. Its situation on a steep bank, surrounded by the Teviot, and flanked by a deep ravine, naturally added to its strength. The present hunting seat of the Duke of Buccleuch in this quarter is at Langholm Lodge. Branksome is celebrated in a song of Allan Ramsay's—

"As I cam' in by Teviot-side,"

as well as in the Lay. About half a mile nearer Hawick, on the other bank of the river from Branksome, is the peel of Goldielands, in tolerably good preservation.

Harden Castle, another relic of the same period, and the cradle of the poet's ancestry, stands not far off on the bank of Borthwick Water, which here joins

the Teviot It takes its name from the number of hares which used to frequent the place (Harden—the ravine of hares), and is a deep, dark, narrow glen, threaded by a little mountain streamlet The castle is perched on the top of the steep bank, and Leyden (Scott's friend), in one of his poems, thus describes the situation —

> "Where Bortha hoarse, that loads the meads with sand,
> Rolls her red tide to Teviot's western strand,
> Through slaty hills, whose sides are shogged with thorn,
> Where springs in scattered tufts the dark green corn,
> Towers wood girt Harden far above the vale,
> And clouds of ravens o'er the turrets sail"

The family of Harden is a cadet branch of the house of Buccleuch, and the heraldic allusion in the poem is to the fact that the Scotts of Harden bear their arms upon the field, while the Scotts of Buccleuch exhibit them on the bend dexter, which they adopted when the estate of Murdiestone came by marriage One of the most famous of the Scotts of Harden was one Walter, who flourished during the reign of Queen Mary He was a great freebooter, and used to bring his spoil to the castle on the cliff His wife was Mary Scott, the Flower of Yarrow (one of the Scotts of Dryhope), and it is of her the well known story is told of the production of a pair of clean spurs at dinner-time, in a covered dish, as a hint of the want of provisions, and of the way to get them Notwithstanding his marauding life Walter seems to have prospered He had a large estate, which was divided among his five sons A number of the most popular of the Border songs are attributed by tradition to an infant whom he carried off in a raid, and whom his kind-hearted wife cherished as one of her own children As illustrative of the temper of this rough old chief, Sir Walter tells a characteristic anecdote in one of the notes of the Minstrelsy. "Upon one occasion, when the village herd was driving out the cattle to pasture, the old laird heard him call loudly to drive out Harden's cow 'Harden's cow!' echoed the affronted chief, 'is it come to that pass? By my faith, they shall soon say Harden's kye' (cows) Accordingly he sounded his bugle, set out with his followers, and next day returned with *a bow of kye and a bassen'd* (brindled) *bull* On his return with this gallant prey he passed a very large haystack It occurred to the provident laird that this would be extremely convenient to fodder his new stock of cattle, but, as no means of transporting it were obvious, he was fain to take leave of it with the apostrophe, now become proverbial, 'By my saul, had ye but four feet, ye should not stand lang there!' In short, as Froissart says of a similar class of feudal robbers, nothing came amiss to them that was not *too heavy or too hot*" It was Auld Wat's eldest son, Sir William Scott, who was saved from being hanged for participation in a foray on the lands of Sir Gibson Murray, of Elibank, by the captor's prudent wife suggesting that it was a pity to sacrifice a young man of good estate when they might marry him to one of their three daughters, a proposal to which it did not, under the circumstances, require much argument to reconcile young Harden Beardie (so called from the long beard he wore in mourning for the execution of Charles I), the poet's great-grandfather, was the grandson of Sir William Scott

Hawick spreads itself on both sides of the Slitterick, a tributary of the Teviot, into which it falls just below the town Having survived repeated burnings during the heat of Border warfare, part of the Tower-inn represents, it is said, the only building which was not consumed in the great blaze of 1570 Hawick is now at the head of the "tweed" manufactories of Scotland It has a rapidly growing population, already over 8,000, and is continually being enriched with new mills. Minto Castle, the seat of the Earl of Minto—open daily except Sunday—perched on a height, between Hawick and Selkirk, commands a fine

view, and is noted for its magnificent library. Minto Crags, close at hand, are a romantic series of cliffs rising suddenly above the Vale of Teviot. A small platform on a projecting crag is known as Barnhills Bed, from a famous outlaw and robber who lived in a strong tower beneath the rocks, of which there are some vestiges, as well as of another old peel on the summit of the heights. Of Melrose a sufficient account is given in the poem and notes. Ruskin is very angry with Scott, because, reverencing it as he did, "he yet casts one of its piscinas, puts a modern steel grate into it, and makes it his fireplace." Founded in 1136, by David I (whose liberality in endowing churches wrung from his successor the moan that he was "a sore saint for the crown"), the abbey was finished ten years later, and was peopled with monks from Yorkshire, who, although of the reformed order, called Cistercians—the first of the class seen north of the Tweed—appear soon to have degenerated into the traditional monkish sensuality, if we may trust the jesting verse:—

> "The monks of Melrose made gude kail
> On Fridays when they fasted;
> Nor wanted they gude beef and ale,
> As lang's their neighbours' lasted!"

The abbey was destroyed by the English in 1322, rebuilt by Robert Bruce, cruelly defaced at the Reformation, but still remains one of the noblest and most interesting specimens of Gothic sculpture and architecture in Scotland. The stone of which it is built, though exposed to the weather for so many ages, retains perfect sharpness, so that even the most minute ornaments seem as entire as when newly wrought. The Abbey is the theme of a poem by Arthur Hallam, who dwells especially on its resistance to decay, and covets a similar tardy waning, till looking on the serene, thoughtful figure of the bard of Abbotsford, he

> —"Knows that a spell of excellent
> Hath power upon the ways of fate,
> And works through time and space unchecked.
> That minstrel of old chivalry,
> In the cold grave must come to lie,
> But his transmuted thoughts have part
> In the collective mind, and never shall depart."

Although Abbotsford has a greater attachment for the traveller than any other spot in the district—not even, perhaps, excepting Melrose itself—it is apt to be a disappointment. It is a very indifferent building in an architectural point of view; defective in taste and poor in effect. It wants elevation, and, above all, repose; the eye is vexed by the composite medley of style, and by the restless pretentious effect to cram a vast deal into a limited space. Most of the pictures help to encourage an exaggerated idea of the imposing aspect of the mansion, and when the stranger sees the reality it falls far short of his expectations. For its own sake it would not be worth the while of turning out of one's road to look at it. To the associations connected with it alone, is due the interest of the place. It should be visited in the spirit of a pilgrimage, and to those who know the sad, romantic story of its creation and consequences, there is a touching interest in every relic and every chamber. How the dreams about the cottage expanded into the ambition of a castle is well known, as well as its disastrous end; the crushing load of debt, the desperate struggle to redeem it, the over-strained and shattered mind. Between the Clarty Hole when Scott first furnished it—"the naked moor, a few turnip fields painfully reclaimed from it, a Scotch cottage and farm-yard, and some Scotch firs"—and the richly wooded domain, with its turreted chateau, into which it was gradually converted, there was a wide contrast. Whatever may be thought of the house, the surrounding plantations were a noble work, and justify the poet's

enthusiasm for the work. A public road divides the mansion and *pleasaunce* from the main body of the park and wood The house stands near the edge of the wooded bank, sloping down towards the Tweed A pious pride has been taken in preserving the whole building as it was in Scott's time The armour and weapons of all kinds are all in their old array; the same pictures hang on the walls, the books are ranged in the order familiar to the master's hand, and even the lounging-coat, the hat, walking-shoes, and staff are ready in their places. Passing through a porch, you enter the hall, which, with its stained glass, trophies of armour, blazonry of Border heroes, "who keepit the marchys of Scotland in the auld time for the kinge," and lozenge pavement of black and white marble, is the finest part of the house. A narrow, low-arched room, running quite across the building, and filled with more armour and other curiosities, leads to the drawing-room on one side, and the dining-room on the other The latter is a handsome chamber, with a low, richly-carved roof of dark oak, spacious bow-window, and numerous valuable and interesting pictures, such as the head of Mary Queen of Scots in a charger, painted by Amias Cawood the day after her decapitation; portraits of old 'Beardie," Lucy Walters, the Duchess of Buccleuch, to whom the Minstrel is supposed to chant his Lay, &c The drawing room is panelled with cedar, and fitted with antique ebony furniture, quaint, richly carved cabinets and precious china ware In a pleasant breakfast-room, overlooking the river, there are some good pictures by Turner, Thomson of Duddingstone, and others The library is the largest room of the house Some 70,000 vols crowd its shelves From this opens Sir Walter's private study—a snug little chamber, with no furniture, except a small writing-table, a plain arm-chair, covered with black leather, and another smaller chair—clearly indicating it as a place for work, not company. There are a few books on each side of the fire-place, and a sort of supplemental library in a gallery which runs round three sides of the room In a closet are preserved, under a glass case, the clothes Sir Walter wore just before his death—a broad-skirted green coat, with large buttons, plaid trousers, heavy shoes, broad-brimmed hat, and stout walking-stick The relics set one thinking of the old man's last days in the house of which he was so proud, the kindly placid figure wheeled about, with all the dogs round him, in a chair, up and down the hall and library, saying, "Ah, I've seen much, but nothing like my ain house—give me one turn more" Much of the decoration of the house is of ancient design, some borrowed from Melrose, some from Dumfermline, Linlithgow, and Roslin Even portions of various old edifices are worked into the building Within the estate is the scene of the last great clan battle of the Borders, that fought in 1526 between the Earls of Angus and Home, backed the former by the Kerrs, and the other by Buccleuch Mr Hope Scott, Q C who married Scott's granddaughter, has inherited the property.

The success of the Lay was beyond the most sanguine expectations of Scott's most enthusiastic admirers In the preface of 1830, he himself estimated the sale at upwards of 30,000 copies, but Lockhart tells us that this was an under-estimate, and that in twenty-five years no fewer than 44,000 copies had been disposed of—an event with few parallels in the history of British poetry The first edition, a magnificent quarto, of which 750 copies were printed, was quickly exhausted, eleven octavo editions, a small quarto, and a foolscap edition followed in rapid succession

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

INTRODUCTION.

The way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old;
His wither'd cheek, and tresses grey,
Seem'd to have known a better day;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the Bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry;
For, welladay! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead;
And he, neglected and oppress'd,
Wish'd to be with them, and at rest.
No more on prancing palfrey borne,
He caroll'd, light as lark at morn;
No longer courted and caress'd,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He pour'd, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay:
Old times were changed, old manners gone;
A stranger fill'd the Stuarts' throne;
The bigots of the iron time
Had call'd his harmless art a crime.
A wandering Harper, scorn'd and poor,
He begg'd his bread from door to door,
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp, a king had loved to hear.

He pass'd where Newark's stately tower
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower:
The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye—
No humbler resting place was nigh.
With hesitating step at last,
The embattled portal arch he pass'd,
Whose ponderous grate and massy bar
Had oft roll'd back the tide of war,
But never closed the iron door
Against the desolate and poor.
The Duchess* mark'd his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell,
That they should tend the old man well:
For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree;
In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb!

When kindness had his wants supplied,
And the old man was gratified,
Began to rise his minstrel pride;
And he began to talk anon,
Of good Earl Francis,† dead and gone,
And of Earl Walter,‡ rest him, God!
A braver ne'er to battle rode;
And how full many a tale he knew,
Of the old warriors of Buccleuch:
And, would the noble Duchess deign
To listen to an old man's strain,
Though stiff his hand, his voice though weak,
He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,
That, if she loved the harp to hear,
He could *make music* to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtain'd;
The Aged Minstrel audience gain'd.
But, when he reach'd the room of state,
Where she, with all her ladies, sate,
Perchance he wish'd his boon denied:
For, when to tune his harp he tried,

* Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth, representative of the ancient Lords of Buccleuch, and widow of the unfortunate James, Duke of Monmouth, who was beheaded in 1685.

† Francis Scott, Earl of Buccleuch, father of the Duchess.

‡ Walter Earl of Buccleuch, grandfather of the Duchess, and a celebrated warrior.

His trembling hand had lost the ease,
Which marks security to please;
And scenes, long past, of joy and pain,
Came wildering o'er his aged brain—
He tried to tune his harp in vain!
The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
And gave him heart, and gave him time,
Till every string's according glee
Was blended into harmony.
And then, he said, he would full fain
He could recall an ancient strain,
He never thought to sing again.
It was not framed for village churls,
But for high dames and mighty earls;
He had play'd it to King Charles the good,
When he kept court in Holyrood;
And much he wish'd, yet fear'd, to try
The long-forgotten melody.
Amid the strings his fingers stray'd,
And an uncertain warbling made,
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure wild,
The old man raised his face, and smiled;
And lighten'd up his faded eye,
With all a poet's ecstasy!
In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along:
The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot:
Cold diffidence, and age's frost,
In the full tide of song were lost;
Each blank, in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied;
And, while his harp responsive rung,
'Twas thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung.

CANTO FIRST.

I.

THE feast was over in Branksome tower,*
And the Ladye had gone to her secret bower;
Her bower that was guarded by word and by spell,
Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell—
Jesu Maria, shield us well!
No living wight, save the Ladye alone,
Had dared to cross the threshold stone.

II.

The tables were drawn, it was idlesse all;
Knight, and page, and household squire,
Loiter'd through the lofty hall,
Or crowded round the ample fire:
The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretch'd upon the rushy floor,
And urged, in dreams, the forest-race,
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.

III.

Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome Hall;
Nine-and-twenty squires of name
Brought them their steeds to bower from stall;
Nine-and-twenty yeomen tall
Waited, duteous, on them all:
They were all knights of metal true,
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.

IV.

Ten of them were sheathed in steel,
With belted sword, and spur on heel:
They quitted not their harness bright,
Neither by day nor yet by night:
They lay down to rest,
With corslet laced,
Pillow'd on buckler cold and hard;
They carv'd at the meal
With gloves of steel,
And they drank the red wine through
The helmet barr'd.

* See "NOTES TO THE 'LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL'" in the Appendix.

V.

Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,
Waited the beck of the warders ten;
Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,
Stood saddled in stable day and night,
Barbed with frontlet of steel, I trow,
And with Jedwood-axe at saddle-bow;
A hundred more fed free in stall:—
Such was the custom of Branksome Hall.

VI.

Why do these steeds stand ready dight?
Why watch these warriors, arm'd, by night?—
They watch, to hear the blood-hound baying;
They watch, to hear the war-horn braying;
To see St. George's red cross streaming,
To see the midnight beacon gleaming:
They watch, against Southern force and guile,
Lest Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's powers,
Threaten Branksome's lordly towers,
From Warkworth, or Naworth, or merry Carlisle.

VII.

Such is the custom of Branksome Hall.—
Many a valiant knight is here;
But he, the chieftain of them all,
His sword hangs rusting on the wall,
Beside his broken spear.
Bards long shall tell,
How Lord Walter fell!
When startled burghers fled, afar,
The furies of the Border war;
When the streets of high Dunedin*
Saw lances gleam, and falchions redden,
And heard the slogan's† deadly yell—
Then the Chief of Branksome fell.

VIII.

Can piety the discord heal,
Or stanch the death-feud's enmity?
Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
Can love of blessed charity?
No! vainly to each holy shrine,
In mutual pilgrimage, they drew;
Implored, in vain, the grace divine
For chiefs, their own red falchions slew.
While Cessford owns the rule of Carr,
While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,
The slaughter'd chiefs, the mortal jar,
The havoc of the feudal war,
Shall never, never be forgot!

IX.

In sorrow o'er Lord Walter's bier
The warlike foresters had bent;
And many a flower, and many a tear,
Old Teviot's maids and matrons lent:
But o'er her warrior's bloody bier
The Ladye dropp'd nor flower nor tear!
Vengeance, deep brooding o'er the slain,
Had lock'd the source of softer woe;
And burning pride, and high disdain,
Forbade the rising tear to flow;
Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
Her son lisp'd from the nurse's knee—
"And if I live to be a man,
My father's death revenged shall be!"
Then fast the mother's tears did seek
To dew the infant's kindling cheek.

X.

All loose her negligent attire,
All loose her golden hair,
Hung Margaret o'er her slaughter'd sire,
And wept in wild despair.
But not alone the bitter tear
Had filial grief supplied;
For hopeless love, and anxious fear,
Had lent their mingled tide:
Nor in her mother's alter'd eye
Dared she to look for sympathy.
Her lover, 'gainst her father's clan,
With Carr in arms had stood,
When Mathouse-burn to Melrose ran
All purple with their blood;
And well she knew, her mother dread,
Before Lord Cranstoun she should wed,
Would see her on her dying bed.

XI.

Of noble race the Ladye came,
Her father was a clerk of fame,

* Edinburgh.
† The war-cry or gathering word of a Border clan.

Of Bethune's line of Picardie:
He learned the art that none may name,
In Padua, far beyond the sea.
Men said, he changed his mortal frame,
By feat of magic mystery;
For when, in studious mood he paced
St. Andrew's cloister'd hall,
His form no darkening shadow traced
Upon the sunny wall!

XII.

And of his skill, as bards avow,
He taught that Ladye fair,
Till to her bidding she could bow
The viewless forms of air.
And now she sits in secret bower,
In old Lord David's western tower,
And listens to a heavy sound,
That moans the mossy turrets round.
Is it the roar of Teviot's tide,
That chafes against the scaur's red side?
Is it the wind that swings the oaks?
Is it the echo from the rocks?
What may it be, the heavy sound,
That moans old Branksome's turrets round?

XIII.

At the sullen, moaning sound,
The ban-dogs bay and howl;
And, from the turrets round,
Loud whoops the startled owl.
In the hall, both squire and knight
Swore that a storm was near,
And looked forth to view the night;
But the night was still and clear!

XIV.

From the sound of Teviot's tide,
Chafing with the mountain's side,
From the groan of the wind-swung oak,
From the sullen echo of the rock,
From the voice of the coming storm,
The Ladye knew it well!
It was the Spirit of the Flood that spoke,
And he called on the Spirit of the Fell.

XV.

RIVER SPIRIT.

"Sleep'st thou, brother?"—

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

—"Brother, nay—
On my hills the moonbeams play
From Craik-cross to Skelfhill-pen,
By every rill, in every glen,
Merry elves their morris pacing,
To aerial minstrelsy,
Emerald rings on brown heath tracing,
Trip it deft and merrily.
Up, and mark their nimble feet!
Up, and list their music sweet!"—

XVI.

RIVER SPIRIT.

"Tears of an imprisoned maiden
Mix with my polluted stream;
Margaret of Branksome, sorrow-laden,
Mourns beneath the moon's pale beam.
Tell me, thou, who view'st the stars,
When shall cease these feudal jars?
What shall be the maiden's fate?
Who shall be the maiden's mate?"—

XVII.

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

"Arthur's slow wain his course doth roll,
In utter darkness, round the pole;
The Northern Bear lowers black and grim;
Orion's studded belt is dim;
Twinkling faint, and distant far,
Shimmers through mist each planet star;
Ill may I read their high decree!
But no kind influence deign they shower
On Teviot's tide, and Branksome's tower,
Till pride be quell'd, and love be free."

XVIII.

The unearthly voices ceast,
And the heavy sound was still;
It died on the river's breast,
It died on the side of the hill.
But round Lord David's tower
The sound still floated near;
For it rung in the Ladye's bower,
And it rung in the Ladye's ear.
She raised her stately head,
And her heart throbb'd high with pride:—
"Your mountains shall bend,
And your streams ascend,
Ere Margaret be our foeman's bride!"

XIX.

The Ladye sought the lofty hall,
Where many a bold retainer lay,
And, with jocund din, among them all,
Her son pursued his infant play.
A fancied moss-trooper, the boy
The truncheon of a spear bestrode,
And round the hall right merrily,
In mimic foray rode.
Even bearded knights, in arms grown old,
Share in his frolic gambols bore,
Albeit their hearts, of rugged mould,
Were stubborn as the steel they wore.
For the grey warriors prophesied,
How the brave boy, in future war,
Should tame the Unicorn's pride,
Exalt the Crescent and the Star.

XX.

The Ladye forgot her purpose high,
One moment, and no more;
One moment gazed with a mother's eye,
As she paused at the arched door.
Then, from amid the armed train,
She call'd to her William of Deloraine.

XXI.

A stark moss-trooping Scott was he,
As e'er couch'd Border lance by knee;
Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,
Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross;
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds;
In Eske or Liddel, fords were none,
But he would ride them, one by one;
Alike to him was time or tide,
December's snow, or July's pride;
Alike to him was tide or time,
Moonless midnight, or matin prime:
Steady of heart, and stout of hand,
As ever drove prey from Cumberland;
Five times outlawed had he been,
By England's King, and Scotland's Queen.

XXII.

"Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,
Mount thee on the wightest steed;
Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,
Until thou come to fair Tweedside;
And in Melrose's holy pile
Seek thou the Monk of St Mary's aisle.
Greet the Father well from me;
Say that the fated hour is come,
And to-night he shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb:
For this will be St Michael's night,
And, though stars be dim, the moon is bright;
And the Cross, of bloody red,
Will point to the grave of the mighty dead.

XXIII.

"What he gives thee, see thou keep;
Stay not thou for food or sleep:
Be it scroll, or be it book,
Into it, Knight, thou must not look;
If thou readest, thou art lorn!
Better hadst thou ne'er been born!"—

XXIV.

"O swiftly can speed my dapple-grey steed,
Which drinks of the Teviot clear;
Ere break of day," the Warrior 'gan say,
"Again will I be here:
And safer by none may thy errand be done,
Than, noble dame, by me;
Letter nor line know I never a one,
Wer't my neck-verse at Hairibee."

XXV.

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
And soon the steep descent he past,
Soon cross'd the sounding barbican,*
And soon the Teviot side he won.
Eastward the wooded path he rode,
Green hazels o'er his basnet nod;
He pass'd the Peel† of Goldiland,
And cross'd old Borthwick's roaring strand;
Dimly he view'd the Moat-hill's mound,
Where Druid shades still flitted round;
In Hawick twinkled many a light,
Behind him soon they set in night;

* *Barbican*, the defence of an outer gate of a feudal castle.
† *Peel*, a Border tower.

And soon he spurr'd his courser keen
Beneath the tower of Hazeldean

XXVI

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark .—
"Stand, ho! thou courier of the dark "—
"For Branksome, ho!" the knight rejoin'd,
And left the friendly tower behind
He turn'd him now from Teviotside,
And, guided by the tinkling rill,
Northward the dark ascent did ride,
And gained the moor at Horsliehill,
Broad on the left before him lay,
For many a mile, the Roman way *

XXVII

A moment now he slack'd his speed,
A moment breathed his panting steed,
Drew saddle-girth and corslet-band,
And loosen'd in the sheath his brand,
On Minto-crags the moonbeams glint,
Where Barnhill hew'd his bed of flint,
Who flung his outlaw'd limbs to rest,
Where falcons hang their giddy nest,
Mid cliffs, from whence his eagle eye
For many a league his prey could spy,
Cliffs, doubling, on their echoes borne,
The terrors of the robber's horn;
Cliffs, which, for many a later year,
The warbling Doric reed shall hear,
When some sad swain shall teach the *grove*,
Ambition is no cure for love!

XXVIII

Unchallenged, thence pass'd Deloraine,
To ancient Riddel's fair domain,
Where Aill, from mountains freed,
Down from the lakes did raving come,
Each wave was crested with *tawny foam*,
Like the mane of a chestnut steed
In vain! no torrent, deep or broad,
Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road

XXIX

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
And the water broke o'er the saddlebow,
Above the foaming tide, I ween,
Scarce half the charger's neck was seen,
For he was barded * from counter to tail,
And the rider was armed complete in mail,
Never heavier man and horse
Stemm'd a midnight torrent's force
The warrior's very plume, I say,
Was daggled by the dashing spray;
Yet, through good heart, and Our Ladye's grace,
At length he gained the landing place

XXX

Now Bowden Moor the march-man won,
And sternly shook his plumed head,
As glanced his eye o'er Halidon, †
For on his soul the slaughter red
Of that unhallow'd morn arose,
When first the Scott and Carr were foes;
When royal James beheld the fray,
Prize to the victor of the day,
When Home and Douglas, in the van,
Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
Reek'd on dark Elliot's Border spear

XXXI

In bitter mood he spurred fast,
And soon the hated heath was past.
And far beneath, in lustre wan,
Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran,
Like some tall rock with lichens grey,
Seem'd dimly huge, the dark Abbaye
When Hawick he pass'd, had curfew rung,
Now midnight lauds ‡ were in Melrose sung
The sound, upon the fitful gale,
In solemn wise did rise and fail,
Like that wild harp, whose magic tone
Is waken'd by the winds alone
But when Melrose he reach'd, 'twas silence all,
He meetly stabled his steed in stall,
And sought the convent's lonely wall

HERE paused the harp, and with its swell
The Master's fire and courage fell,

* An ancient Roman road, crossing through part of Roxburghshire

* *Barded*, or barbed,—applied to a horse accoutred with defensive armour

† An ancient seat of the Kerrs of Cessford, now demolished

‡ *Lauds*, the midnight service of the Catholic Church

Dejectedly, and low, he bow'd,
And, gazing timid on the crowd,
He seem'd to seek, in every eye,
If they approved his minstrelsy;
And, diffident of present praise,
Somewhat he spoke of former days,
And how old age, and wand'ring long,
Had done his hand and harp some wrong.
The Duchess, and her daughters fair,
And every gentle lady there,
Each after each, in due degree,
Gave praises to his melody;
His hand was true, his voice was clear,
And much they long'd the rest to hear.
Encouraged thus, the Aged Man,
After meet rest, again began.

CANTO SECOND.

I.

If thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
For the gay beams of lightsome day,
Gild, but to flout, the ruins grey.
When the broken arches are black in night,
And each shafted oriel glimmers white;
When the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruin'd central tower;
When buttress and buttress, alternately,
Seem framed of ebon and ivory;
When silver edges the imagery,
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
Then go—but go alone the while—
Then view St. David's ruin'd pile;
And, home returning, soothly swear,
Was never scene so sad and fair!

II.

Short halt did Deloraine make there;
Little reck'd he of the scene so fair:
With dagger's hilt, on the wicket strong,
He struck full loud, and struck full long.
The porter hurried to the gate—
"Who knocks so loud, and knocks so late?"—
"From Branksome I," the warrior cried;
And strait the wicket open'd wide:
For Branksome's Chiefs had in battle stood,
To fence the rights of fair Melrose;
And lands and livings, many a rood,
Had gifted the shrine for their souls' repose.

III.

Bold Deloraine his errand said;
The porter bent his humble head;
With torch in hand, and feet unshod,
And noiseless step, the path he trod;
The arched cloisters, far and wide,
Rang to the warrior's clanking stride,
Till, stooping low his lofty crest,
He enter'd the cell of the ancient priest,
And lifted his barred aventayle,*
To hail the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.

IV.

"The Ladye of Branksome greets thee by me;
Says, that the fated hour is come,
And that to-night I shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb."—
From sackcloth couch the monk arose,
With toil his stiffen'd limbs he rear'd;
A hundred years had flung their snows
On his thin locks and floating beard.

V.

And strangely on the Knight look'd he,
And his blue eyes gleam'd wild and wide;
"And, darest thou, Warrior! seek to see
What heaven and hell alike would hide?
My breast, in belt of iron pent,
With shirt of hair and scourge of thorn;
For threescore years, in penance spent,
My knees those flinty stones have worn;
Yet all too little to atone
For knowing what should ne'er be known.
Would'st thou thy every future year
In ceaseless prayer and penance drie,
Yet wait thy latter end with fear—
Then, daring Warrior, follow me!"—

* *Aventayle*, visor of the helmet.

Danced on the dark-brow'd Warrior's mail,
And kiss'd his waving plume

XIX

Before their eyes the Wizard lay,
As if he had not been dead a day
His hoary beard in silver roll'd,
He seem'd some seventy winters old,
A palmer's amice wrapp'd him round,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea ·
His left hand held his Book of Might,
A silver cross was in his right;
The lamp was placed beside his knee
High and majestic was his look,
At which the fellest fiends had shook,
And all unruffled was his face
They trusted his soul had gotten grace.

XX.

Often had William of Deloraine
Rode through the battle's bloody plain,
And trampled down the warriors slain,
And neither known remorse nor awe,
Yet now remorse and awe he own'd;
His breath came thick, his head swam round,
When this strange scene of death he saw
Bewilder'd and unnerv'd he stood,
And the priest pray'd fervently and loud
With eyes averted prayed he,
He might not endure the sight to see,
Of the man he had loved so brotherly.

XXI

And when the priest his death-prayer had pray'd,
Thus unto Deloraine he said —
"Now, speed thee what thou hast to do,
Or, Warrior, we may dearly rue;
For those, thou mayst not look upon,
Are gathering fast round the yawning stone!"
Then Deloraine, in terror, took
From the cold hand the Mighty Book,
With iron clasp'd, and with iron bound:
He thought, as he took it, the dead man frown'd,
But the glare of the sepulchral light,
Perchance, had dazzled the warrior's sight.

XXII.

When the huge stone sunk o'er the tomb,
The night return'd in double gloom.
For the moon had gone down, and the stars were few;
And, as the Knight and Priest withdrew,
With wavering steps and dizzy brain,
They hardly might the postern gain
'Tis said, as through the aisles they pass'd,
They heard strange noises on the blast,
And through the cloister-galleries small,
Which at mid-height thread the chancel wall,
Loud sobs, and laughter louder, ran,
And voices unlike the voice of man,
As if the fiends kept holiday,
Because these spells were brought to day
I cannot tell how the truth may be;
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

XXIII

"Now, hie thee hence," the Father said,
"And when we are on death-bed laid,
O may our dear Ladye, and sweet St John,
Forgive our souls for the deed we have done!"
The Monk return'd him to his cell,
And many a prayer and penance sped;
When the convent met at the noontide bell—
The Monk of St Mary's aisle was dead!
Before the cross was the body laid,
With hands clasp'd fast, as if still he pray'd

XXIV.

The Knight breathed free in the morning wind,
And strove his hardihood to find:
He was glad when he pass'd the tomb-stones grey,
Which girdle round the fair Abbaye;
For the mystic Book, to his bosom prest,
Felt like a load upon his breast,

And his joints, with nerves of iron twin'd,
Shook, like the aspen leaves in wind.
Full fain was he when the dawn of day,
Began to brighten Cheviot grey:
He joy'd to see the cheerful light,
And he said Ave Mary, as well as he might.

XXV.

The sun had brighten'd Cheviot grey,
The sun had brighten'd the Carter's* side;
And soon beneath the rising day
Smiled Branksome towers and Teviot's tide.
The wild birds told their warbling tale,
And waken'd every flower that blows,
And peeped forth the violet pale,
And spread her breast the mountain rose.
And lovelier than the rose so red,
Yet paler than the violet pale,
She early left her sleepless bed,
The fairest maid of Teviotdale.

XXVI.

Why does fair Margaret so early awake,
And don her kirtle so hastilie;
And the silken knots, which in hurry she would make,
Why tremble her slender fingers to tie;
Why does she stop, and look often around,
As she glides down the secret stair,
And why does she pat the shaggy blood-hound,
As she rouses him up from his lair;
And, though she passes the postern alone,
Why is not the watchman's bugle blown?

XXVII.

The Ladye steps in doubt and dread,
Lest her watchful mother hear her tread;
The Ladye caresses the rough blood-hound,
Lest his voice should waken the castle round,
The watchman's bugle is not blown,
For he was her foster-father's son;
And she glides through the greenwood at dawn of light,
To meet Baron Henry, her own true knight.

XXVIII.

The Knight and Ladye fair are met,
And under the hawthorn's boughs are set.
A fairer pair were never seen
To meet beneath the hawthorn green.
He was stately, and young, and tall,
Dreaded in battle, and loved in hall:
And she, when love, scarce told, scarce hid,
Lent to her cheek a livelier red,
When the half sigh her swelling breast
Against the silken ribbon prest;
When her blue eyes their secret told,
Though shaded by her locks of gold—
Where would you find the peerless fair,
With Margaret of Branksome might compare!

XXIX.

And now, fair dames, methinks I see
You listen to my minstrelsy,
Your waving locks ye backward throw,
And sidelong bend your necks of snow
Ye ween to hear a melting tale,
Of two true lovers in a dale,
And how the Knight, with tender fire,
To paint his faithful passion strove;
Swore he might at her feet expire,
But never, never cease to love;
And how she blush'd and how she sigh'd,
And, half consenting, half denied,
And said that she would die a maid;—
Yet, might the bloody feud be stay'd,
Henry of Cranstoun, and only he,
Margaret of Branksome's choice should be.

XXX.

Alas! fair dames, your hopes are vain!
My harp has lost the enchanting strain;
Its lightness would my age reprove:
My hairs are grey, my limbs are old,
My heart is dead, my veins are cold:
I may not, must not, sing of love.

* A mountain on the Border of England, above Jedburgh.

VII

But when he rein'd his courser round,
And saw his foeman on the ground
Lie senseless as the bloody clay,
He bade his page to stanch the wound,
And there beside the warrior stay,
And tend him in his doubtful state,
And lead him to Branksome castle-gate
His noble mind was inly moved
For the kinsman of the maid he loved.
"This shalt thou do without delay
No longer here myself may stay,
Unless the swifter I speed away,
Short shrift will be at my dying day"

VIII

Away in speed Lord Cranstoun rode,
The Goblin-Page behind abode,
His lord's command he ne'er withstood,
Though small his pleasure to do good
As the corslet off he took,
The dwarf espied the Mighty Book!
Much he marvell'd a knight of pride,
Like a book-bosom'd priest should ride
He thought not to search or stanch the wound,
Until the secret he had found.

IX

The iron band, the iron clasp,
Resisted long the elfin grasp
For when the first he had undone,
It closed as he the next begun
Those iron clasps, that iron band,
Would not yield to unchristen'd hand,
Till he smear'd the cover o'er
With the Borderer's curdled gore,
A moment then the volume spread,
And one short spell therein he read,
It had much of glamour* might.
Could make a ladye seem a knight;
The cobwebs on a dungeon wall
Seem tapestry in lordly hall,
A nut-shell seem a gilded barge,
A sheeling† seem a palace large,
And youth seem age, and age seem youth—
All was delusion, nought was truth

X.

He had not read another spell,
When on his cheek a buffet fell,
So fierce, it stretch'd him on the plain,
Beside the wounded Deloraine
From the ground he rose dismay'd,
And shook his huge and matted head;
One word he mutter'd, and no more,
"Man of age, thou smitest sore!"—
No more the Elfin Page durst try
Into the wondrous Book to pry,
The clasps, though smear'd with Christian gore,
Shut faster than they were before.
He hid it underneath his cloak —
Now, if you ask who gave the stroke,
I cannot tell, so mot I thrive,
It was not given by man alive.

XI

Unwillingly himself he address'd
To do his master's high behest:
He lifted up the living corse,
And laid it on the weary horse,
He led him into Branksome Hall,
Before the beards of the warders all,
And each did after swear and say,
There only pass'd a wain of hay
He took him to Lord David's tower,
Even to the Ladye's secret bower,
And, but that stronger spells were spread,
And the door might not be opened,
He had laid him on her very bed
Whate'er he did of gramarye,*
Was always done maliciously,
He flung the warrior on the ground,
And the blood well'd freshly from the wound

XII

As he repass'd the outer court,
He spied the fair young child at sport
He thought to train him to the wood,
For, at a word, be it understood,
He was always for ill, and never for good
Seem'd to the boy, some comrade gay
Led him forth to the woods to play;
On the drawbridge the warders stout
Saw a terrier and lurcher passing out

XIII.

He led the boy o'er bank and fell,
Until they came to a woodland brook,

* Magical delusion † A shepherd's hut

* Magic

The running stream dissolved the spell,
  And his own elvish shape he took.
Could he have had his pleasure vilde,
He had crippled the joints of the noble child;
Or, with his fingers long and lean,
Had strangled him in fiendish spleen:
But his awful mother he had in dread,
And also his power was limited;
So he but scowl'd on the startled child,
And darted through the forest wild;
The woodland brook he bounding cross'd,
And laugh'd, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"—

XIV.

Full sore amaz'd at the wondrous change,
  And frighten'd as a child might be,
At the wild yell and visage strange,
  And the dark words of gramarye,
The child, amidst the forest bower,
Stood rooted like a lily flower;
  And when at length, with trembling pace,
    He sought to find where Branksome lay,
  He fear'd to see that grisly face
    Glare from some thicket on his way.
Thus, starting oft, he journey'd on,
And deeper in the wood is gone,—
For aye the more he sought his way,
The farther still he went astray,—
Until he heard the mountains round
Ring to the baying of a hound.

XV.

And hark! and hark! the deep-mouth'd bark
  Comes nigher still, and nigher:
Bursts on the path a dark blood-hound,
His tawny muzzle track'd the ground,
  And his red eye shot fire.
Soon as the wilder'd child saw he,
He flew at him right furiouslie.
I ween you would have seen with joy
The bearing of the gallant boy,
When, worthy of his noble sire,
His wet cheek glow'd 'twixt fear and ire!
He faced the blood-hound manfully,
And held his little bat on high;
So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
At cautious distance hoarsely bay'd,
  But still in act to spring;
When dash'd an archer through the glade,
And when he saw the hound was stay'd,
  He drew his tough bow-string;
But a rough voice cried, "Shoot not, hoy!
Ho! shoot not, Edward—'Tis a boy!"

XVI.

The speaker issued from the wood,
And check'd his fellow's surly mood,
  And quell'd the ban-dog's ire:
He was an English yeoman good,
  And born in Lancashire.
Well could he hit a fallow-deer
  Five hundred feet him fro;
With hand more true, and eye more clear,
  No archer bended bow.
His coal-black hair, shorn round and close,
  Set off his sun-burn'd face:
Old England's sign, St George's cross,
  His barret-cap did grace;
His bugle-horn hung by his side,
  All in a wolf-skin baldric tied;
And his short falchion, sharp and clear,
Had pierced the throat of many a deer.

XVII.

His kirtle, made of forest green,
  Reach'd scantly to his knee;
And, at his belt, of arrows keen
  A furbish'd sheaf bore he;
His buckler, scarce in breadth a span,
  No larger fence had he;
He never counted him a man,
  Would strike below the knee:
His slacken'd bow was in his hand,
And the leash, that was his blood-hound's band.

XVIII.

He would not do the fair child harm,
But held him with his powerful arm,
That he might neither fight nor flee;
For when the Red-Cross spied he,
The boy strove long and violently.
"Now, by St George," the archer cries,
"Edward, methinks we have a prize!
This boy's fair face, and courage free,
Show he is come of high degree."—

XIX.

"Yes! I am come of high degree,
  For I am the heir of bold Buccleuch;

Was frequent heard the changing guard,
And watch-word from the sleepless ward,
While, wearied by the endless din
Blood-hound and ban-dog yell'd within.

XXXI.

The noble Dame, amid the broil,
Shared the grey Seneschal's high toil,
And spoke of danger with a smile,
Cheer'd the young knights, and council sage
Held with the chiefs of riper age.
No tidings of the foe were brought.
Nor of his numbers knew they aught,
Nor what in time of truce he sought.
Some said that there were thousands ten:
And others ween'd that it was nought
But Leven Clans, or Tynedale men.
Who came to gather in black mail;*
And Liddesdale, with small avail,
Might drive them lightly back agen
So pass'd the anxious night away,
And welcome was the peep of day

CEASED the high sound—the listening throng
Applaud the Master of the Song;
And marvel much, in helpless age.
So hard should be his pilgrimage.
Had he no friend—no daughter dear,
His wandering toil to share and cheer;
No son to be his father's stay,
And guide him on the rugged way?
"Ay, once he had—but he was dead!"
Upon the harp he stoop'd his head
And busied himself the strings withal
To hide the tear, that fain would fall
In solemn measure, soft and slow,
Arose a father's notes of woe.

CANTO FOURTH.

I

SWEET Teviot! on thy silver tide
The glaring bale-fires blaze no more;
No longer steel-clad warriors ride
Along thy wild and willow'd shore;
Where'er thou wind'st, by dale or hill,
All, all is peaceful, all is still,

* Protection money exacted by freebooters.

As if thy waves, since Time was born,
Since first they roll'd upon the Tweed,
Had only heard the shepherd's reed,
Nor started at the bugle-horn

II

Unlike the tide of human time,
Which, though it change in ceaseless flow,
Retains each grief, retains each crime
Its earliest course was doom'd to know;
And, darker as it downward bears,
Is stained with past and present tears.
Low as that tide has ebb'd with me,
It still reflects to Memory's eye
The hour my brave, my only boy.
Fell by the side of great Dundee.
Why, when the volleying musket play'd
Against the bloody Highland blade,
Why was not I beside him laid?—
Enough—he died the death of fame;
Enough—he died with conquering Greme.

III

Now over Border dale and fell,
Full wide and far was terror spread;
For pathless marsh, and mountain cell,
The peasant left his lowly shed
The frighten'd flocks and herds were pent
Beneath the peel's rude battlement;
And maids and matrons dropp'd the tear,
While ready warriors seiz'd the spear
From Branksome's towers, the watchman's eye
Dun wreaths of distant smoke can spy,
Which, curling in the rising sun,
Show'd southern ravage was begun.

IV.

Now loud the heedful gate-ward cried—
"Prepare ye all for blows and blood!
Watt Tinlinn, from the Liddel-side,
Comes wading through the flood
Full oft the Tynedale snatchers knock
At his lone gate, and prove the lock;
It was but last St. Barnabright
They sieged him a whole summer night,
But fled at morning, well they knew
In vain he never twang'd the yew
Right sharp has been the evening shower
That drove him from his Liddel tower,

And, by my faith," the gate-ward said,
"I think 'twill prove a Warden-Raid!"*

V.

While thus he spoke, the bold yeoman
Enter'd the echoing barbican.
He led a small and shaggy nag,
That through a bog, from hag to hag,†
Could bound like any Billhope stag.
It bore his wife and children twain;
A half-cloth'd serf was all their train;
His wife, stout, ruddy, and dark-brow'd,
Of silver brooch and bracelet proud,
Laugh'd to her friends among the crowd.
He was of stature passing tall,
But sparely form'd, and lean withal;
A batter'd morion on his brow;
A leather jack, as fence enow,
On his broad shoulders loosely hung;
A Border axe behind was slung;
His spear, six Scottish ells in length,
Seemed newly dyed with gore;
His shafts and bow, of wondrous strength,
His hardy partner bore.

VI.

Thus to the Ladye did Tinlinn show
The tidings of the English foe:—
"Belted Will Howard is marching here,
And hot Lord Dacre, with many a spear,
And all the German hackbut men,‡
Who have long lain at Askerten:
They cross'd the Liddel at curfew hour,
And burned my little lonely tower:
The fiend receive their souls therefor!
It had not been burnt this year and more.
Barn-yard and dwelling, blazing bright,
Served to guide me on my flight;
But I was chased the livelong night.
Black John of Akeshaw, and Fergus Graeme,
Fast upon my traces came,
Until I turned at Priesthaugh Scrogg,
And shot their horses in the bog,
Slew Fergus with my lance outright—
I had him long at high despite:
He drove my cows last Fastern's night."

* An inroad commanded by the Warden in person.
† The broken ground in a bog. ‡ Hand gun.

VII.

Now weary scouts from Liddesdale,
Fast hurrying in, confirm'd the tale;
As far as they could judge by ken,
Three hours would bring to Teviot's strand
Three thousand armed Englishmen—
Meanwhile, full many a warlike band,
From Teviot, Aill, and Ettrick shade,
Came in, their Chief's defence to aid.
There was saddling and mounting in haste,
There was pricking o'er moor and lea;
He that was last at the trysting place
Was but lightly held of his gay ladye.

VIII.

From fair St Mary's silver wave,
From dreary Gamescleugh's dusky height,
His ready lances Thirlestane brave
Array'd beneath a banner bright.
The tressured fleur-de-luce he claims,
To wreathe his shield, since royal James,
Encamp'd by Fala's mossy wave,
The proud distinction grateful gave,
For faith 'mid feudal jars;
What time, save Thirlestane alone,
Of Scotland's stubborn barons none
Would march to southern wars;
And hence, in fair remembrance worn,
Yon sheaf of spears his crest has borne;
Hence his high motto shines reveal'd—
"Ready, aye ready," for the field.

IX.

An aged Knight, to danger steel'd,
With many a moss trooper came on;
And azure in a golden field,
The stars and crescent graced his shield,
Without the bend of Murdieston.
Wide lay his lands round Oakwood tower,
And wide round haunted Castle-Ower;
High over Borthwick's mountain flood,
His wood embosom'd mansion stood;
In the dark glen, so deep below,
The herds of plunder'd England low;

Through the dark wood, in mingled tone,
Were Border pipes and bugles blown;
The coursers' neighing he could ken,
A measured tread of marching men;
While broke at times the solemn hum,
The Almayn's sullen kettle-drum;
And banners tall of crimson sheen,
Above the copse appear;
And, glistening through the hawthorns green
Shine helm, and shield and spear.

XVII.

Light forayers, first, to view the ground,
Spurr'd their fleet coursers loosely round;
Behind in close array, and fast,
The Kendal archers, all in green,
Obedient to the bugle blast,
Advancing from the wood were seen
To back and guard the archer band,
Lord Dacre's bill-men were at hand:
A hardy race, on Irthing bred,
With kirtles white, and crosses red,
Array'd beneath the banner tall,
That stream'd o'er Acre's conquer'd wall;
And minstrels, as they march'd in order,
Play'd, "Noble Lord Dacre, he dwells on the Border."

XVIII.

Behind the English bill and bow,
The mercenaries, firm and slow,
Moved on to fight, in dark array,
By Conrad led of Wolfenstein,
Who brought the band from distant Rhine,
And sold their blood for foreign pay
The camp their home, their law the sword,
They knew no country, own'd no lord
They were not arm'd like England's sons,
But bore the levin-darting guns;
Buff coats, all frounced and broider'd o'er,
And morsing-horns* and scarfs they wore,
Each better knee was bared, to aid
The warriors in the escalade;
All, as they march'd, in rugged tongue,
Songs of Teutonic feuds they sung.

* Powder-flasks.

XIX.

But louder still the clamour grew,
And louder still the minstrels blew,
When, from beneath the greenwood tree,
Rode forth Lord Howard's chivalry;
His men at-arms, with glaive and spear,
Brought up the battle's glittering rear
There many a youthful knight, full keen
To gain his spurs, in arms was seen;
With favour in his crest, or glove,
Memorial of his ladye-love.
So rode they forth in fair array,
Till full their lengthen'd lines display,
Then call'd a halt, and made a stand,
And cried, "St. George, for merry England!"

XX.

Now every English eye, intent
On Branksome's armed towers was bent;
So near they were that they might know
The straining harsh of each cross-bow,
On battlement and bartizan
Gleam'd axe, and spear, and partisan;
Falcon and culver,* on each tower,
Stood prompt their deadly hail to shower.
And flashing armour frequent broke
From eddying whirls of sable smoke,
Where upon tower and turret head,
The seething pitch and molten lead
Reek'd, like a witch's cauldron red
While yet they gaze, the bridges fall,
The wicket opes, and from the wall
Rides forth the hoary Seneschal.

XXI.

Armed he rode, all save the head,
His white beard o'er his breast-plate spread;
Unbroke by age, erect his seat
He ruled his eager courser's gait;
Forced him, with chasten'd fire, to prance,
And high, curvetting slow advance:
In sign of truce, his better hand
Display'd a peeled willow wand;
His squire, attending in the rear,
Bore high a gauntlet on a spear †

* Ancient pieces of artillery

† A glove upon a lance was the emblem of faith among the ancient Borderers who were wont, when any one broke his word to expose this emblem and proclaim him a faithless villain at the first Border meeting This ceremony was much dreaded.

When they espied him riding out,
Lord Howard and Lord Dacre stout
Sped to the front of their array,
To hear what this old knight should say.

XXII.

"Ye English warden lords, of you
Demands the Ladye of Buccleuch,
Why, 'gainst the truce of Border tide,
In hostile guise ye dare to ride,
With Kendal bow, and Gilsland brand,
And all yon mercenary band,
Upon the bounds of fair Scotland?
My Ladye reads you swith return;
And, if but one poor straw you burn,
Or do our towers so much molest
As scare one swallow from her nest,
St. Mary! but we'll light a brand
Shall warm your hearths in Cumberland."—

XXIII.

A wrathful man was Dacre's lord,
But calmer Howard took the word:
"May't please thy Dame, Sir Seneschal,
To seek the castle's outward wall,
Our pursuivant-at-arms shall show
Both why we came, and when we go."—
The message sped, the noble Dame
To the wall's outward circle came;
Each chief around lean'd on his spear,
To see the pursuivant appear.
All in Lord Howard's livery dress'd,
The lion argent deck'd his breast;
He led a boy of blooming hue—
O sight to meet a mother's view!
It was the heir of great Buccleuch.
Obeisance meet the herald made,
And thus his master's will he said:—

XXIV.

"It irks, high Dame, my noble Lords,
'Gainst ladye fair to draw their swords;
But yet they may not tamely see,
All through the Western Wardenry,
Your law-contemning kinsmen ride,
And burn and spoil the Border side;
And ill beseems your rank and birth
To make your towers a flemens-firth.*
We claim from thee William of Deloraine,
That he may suffer march-treason pain:
It was but last St Cuthbert's even
He prick'd to Stapleton on Leven,
Harried* the lands of Richard Musgrave,
And slew his brother by dint of glaive.
Then, since a lone and widow'd Dame
These restless riders may not tame,
Either receive within thy towers
Two hundred of my master's powers,
Or straight they sound their warrison,†
And storm and spoil thy garrison:
And this fair boy, to London led,
Shall good King Edward's page be bred."

XXV.

He ceased—and loud the boy did cry,
And stretch'd his little arms on high;
Implored for aid each well-known face,
And strove to seek the Dame's embrace.
A moment changed that Ladye's cheer,
Gush'd to her eye the unbidden tear;
She gazed upon the leaders round,
And dark and sad each warrior frown'd;
Then, deep within her sobbing breast
She lock'd the struggling sigh to rest;
Unalter'd and collected stood,
And thus replied, in dauntless mood:—

XXVI.

"Say to your Lords of high emprize,
Who war on women and on boys,
That either William of Deloraine
Will cleanse him, by oath, of march-treason stain,
Or else he will the combat take
'Gainst Musgrave, for his honour's sake.
No knight in Cumberland so good,
But William may count with him kin and blood.
Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword,
When English blood swell'd Ancram's ford;
And but Lord Dacre's steed was wight,
And bare him ably in the flight,
Himself had seen him dubb'd a knight.
For the young heir of Branksome's line,
God be his aid, and God be mine;
Through me no friend shall meet his doom;
Here, while I live, no foe finds room.

* An asylum for outlaws.

* Plundered. † Note of assault.

Then, if thy Lords their purpose urge,
Take our defiance loud and high;
Our slogan is their lyke-wake* dirge,
Our moat, the grave where they shall lie."

XXVII.

Proud she look'd round, applause to claim—
Then lighten'd Thirlestane's eye of flame,
His bugle Wat of Harden blew;
Pensils and pennons wide were flung,
To heaven the Border slogan rung,
"St Mary for the young Buccleuch!"
The English war-cry answered wide,
And forward bent each southern spear,
Each Kendal archer made a stride,
And drew the bowstring to his ear;
Each minstrel's war-note loud was blown;—
But, ere a grey-goose shaft had flown,
A horseman gallop'd from the rear.

XXVIII.

"Ah! noble Lords!" he breathless said,
"What treason has your march betray'd?
What make you here, from aid so far,
Before you walls, around you war?
Your foemen triumph in the thought,
That in the toils the lion's caught.
Already on dark Ruberslaw
The Douglas holds his weapon-schaw;†
The lances, waving in his train,
Clothe the dun heath like autumn grain;
And on the Liddel's northern strand,
To bar retreat to Cumberland,
Lord Maxwell ranks his merry men good,
Beneath the eagle and the rood;
And Jedwood, Eske, and Teviotdale,
Have to proud Angus come;
And all the Merse and Lauderdale
Have risen with haughty Home.
An exile from Northumberland,
In Liddesdale I've wander'd long;
But still my heart was with merry England,
And cannot brook my country's wrong;
And hard I've spurr'd all night to show
The mustering of coming foe."—

XXIX.

"And let them come!" fierce Dacre cried;
"For soon yon crest, my father's pride,
That swept the shores of Judah's sea,
And waved in gales of Galilee,
From Branksome's highest towers display'd,
Shall mock the rescue's lingering aid!—
Level each harquebuss on row;
Draw, merry archers, draw the bow;
Up, bill-men, to the walls, and cry,
Dacre for England, win or die!"—

XXX.

"Yet hear," quoth Howard, "calmly hear,
Nor deem my words the words of fear:
For who, in field or foray slack,
Saw the blanche lion e'er fall back?
But thus to risk our Border flower
In strife against a kingdom's power,
Ten thousand Scots 'gainst thousands three,
Certes, were desperate policy.
Nay, take the terms the Ladye made,
Ere conscious of the advancing aid:
Let Musgrave meet fierce Deloraine
In single fight; and, if he gain,
He gains for us; but if he's cross'd,
'Tis but a single warrior lost:
The rest, retreating as they came,
Avoid defeat, and death, and shame."

XXXI.

Ill could the haughty Dacre brook
His brother Warden's sage rebuke;
And yet his forward step he stay'd,
And slow and sullenly obeyed.
But ne'er again the Border side
Did these two lords in friendship ride;
And this slight discontent, men say,
Cost blood upon another day.

XXXII.

The pursuivant-at-arms again
Before the castle took his stand;
His trumpet call'd, with parleying strain,
The leaders of the Scottish band;

* *Lyke-wake*, the watching a corpse previous to interment.
† *Weapon-schaw*, the military array of a county.

And he defied, in Musgrave's right,
Stout Deloraine to single fight;
A gauntlet at their feet he laid,
And thus the terms of fight he said:—
"If in the lists good Musgrave's sword
Vanquish the knight of Deloraine,
Your youthful chieftain, Branksome's Lord,
Shall hostage for his clan remain:
If Deloraine foil good Musgrave,
The boy his liberty shall have.
Howe'er it falls, the English band,
Unharming Scots, by Scots unharm'd,
In peaceful march, like men unarm'd,
Shall straight retreat to Cumberland."

XXXIII.

Unconscious of the near relief,
The proffer pleased each Scottish chief,
Though much the Ladye sage gainsay'd;
For though their hearts were brave and true,
From Jedwood's recent sack they knew,
How tardy was the Regent's aid:
And you may guess the noble Dame
Durst not the secret prescience own,
Sprung from the art she might not name,
By which the coming help was known.
Closed was the compact, and agreed,
That lists should be enclosed with speed,
Beneath the castle, on a lawn:
They fix'd the morrow for the strife,
On foot, with Scottish axe and knife,
At the fourth hour from peep of dawn;
When Deloraine, from sickness freed,
Or else a champion in his stead,
Should for himself and chieftain stand,
Against stout Musgrave, hand to hand.

XXXIV.

I know right well, that, in their lay,
Full many minstrels sing and say,
Such combat should be made on horse,
On foaming steed, in full career,
With brand to aid, when as the spear
Should shiver in the course:
But he, the jovial Harper, taught
Me, yet a youth, how it was fought,
In guise which now I say;
He knew each ordinance and clause
Of Black Lord Archibald's battle laws,
In the old Douglas' day.
He brook'd not, he, that scoffing tongue
Should tax his minstrelsy with wrong,
Or call his song untrue:
For this, when they the goblet plied,
And such rude taunt had chafed his pride,
The Bard of Reull he slew.
On Teviot's side, in fight they stood,
And tuneful hands were stain'd with blood;
Where still the thorn's white branches wave,
Memorial o'er his rival's grave.

XXXV.

Why should I tell the rigid doom,
That dragg'd my master to his tomb;
How Ousenam's maidens tore their hair,
Wept till their eyes were dead and dim,
And wrung their hands for love of him,
Who died at Jedwood Air?
He died!—his scholars, one by one,
To the cold silent grave are gone;
And I, alas! survive alone,
To muse o'er rivalries of yore,
And grieve that I shall hear no more
The strains, with envy heard before;
For, with my minstrel brethren fled,
My jealousy of song is dead.

He paused: the listening dames again
Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain.
With many a word of kindly cheer,—
In pity half, and half sincere,—
Marvell'd the Duchess how so well
His legendary song could tell—
Of ancient deeds, so long forgot;
Of feuds, whose memory was not;
Of forests, now laid waste and bare;
Of towers, which harbour now the hare;
Of manners, long since changed and gone;
Of chiefs, who under their grey stone
So long had slept, that fickle Fame
Had blotted from her rolls their name,
And twined round some new minion's head
The fading wreath for which they bled;
In sooth, 'twas strange, this old man's verse
Could call them from their marble hearse.

The Harper smiled, well pleased, for ne'er
Was flattery lost on Poet's ear
A simple race! they waste their toil
For the vain tribute of a smile;
E'en when in age their flame expires,
Her dulcet breath can fan its fires
Their drooping fancy wakes at praise,
And strives to trim the short-lived blaze

Smiled, then, well-pleased, the Aged Man,
And thus his tale continued ran

CANTO FIFTH

I

Call it not vain—they do not err,
Who say, that when the Poet dies,
Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,
And celebrates his obsequies
Who say, tall cliff, and cavern lone,
For the departed Bard make moan,
That mountains weep in crystal rill,
That flowers in tears of balm distil,
Through his loved groves that breezes sigh,
And oaks, in deeper groan, reply,
And rivers teach their rushing wave
To murmur dirges round his grave

II

Not that, in sooth, o'er mortal urn
Those things inanimate can mourn,
But that the stream, the wood, the gale,
Is vocal with the plaintive wail
Of those, who, else forgotten long,
Lived in the poet's faithful song,
And, with the poet's parting breath,
Whose memory feels a second death
The Maid's pale shade, who wails her lot,
That love, true love, should be forgot,
From rose and hawthorn shakes the tear
Upon the gentle Minstrel's bier
The phantom Knight, his glory fled,
Mourns o'er the field he heap'd with dead,
Mounts the wild blast that sweeps amain,
And shrieks along the battle-plain
The Chief, whose antique crownlet long
Still sparkled in the feudal song,
Now, from the mountain's misty throne,
Sees, in the thanedom once his own,
His ashes undistinguished lie,
His place, his power, his memory die
His groans the lonely caverns fill,
His tears of rage impel the rill;
All mourn the Minstrel's harp unstrung,
Their name unknown, their praise unsung

III

Scarcely the hot assault was staid,
The terms of truce were scarcely made,
When they could spy, from Branksome's towers,
The advancing march of martial powers
Thick clouds of dust afar appear'd,
And trampling steeds were faintly heard,
Bright spears above the columns dun,
Glanced momentary to the sun;
And feudal banners fair display'd
The bands that moved to Branksome's aid

IV.

Vails not to tell each hardy clan,
From the fair Middle Marches came,
The Bloody Heart blazed in the van,
Announcing Douglas, dreaded name!
Vails not to tell what steeds did spurn,
Where the Seven Spears of Wedderburne
Their men in battle-order set;
And Swinton laid the lance in rest,
That tamed of yore the sparkling crest
Of Clarence's Plantagenet
Nor list I say what hundreds more,
From the rich Merse and Lammermore,
And Tweed's fair borders, to the war,
Beneath the crest of old Dunbar,
And Hepburn's mingled banners come,
Down the steep mountain glittering far,
And shouting still, "A Home! a Home!"

V.

Now squire and knight, from Branksome sent,
On many a courteous message went;
To every chief and lord they paid
Meet thanks for prompt and powerful aid,
And told them,—how a truce was made,

And how a day of fight was ta'en
'Twixt Musgrave and stout Deloraine;
And how the Ladye pray'd them dear,
That all would stay the fight to see,
And deign, in love and courtesy,
To taste of Branksome cheer.
Nor, while they bade to feast each Scot,
Were England's noble Lords forgot.
Himself, the hoary Seneschal
Rode forth, in seemly terms to call
Those gallant foes to Branksome Hall.
Accepted Howard, than whom knight
Was never dubb'd, more bold in fight,
Nor, when from war and armour free,
More famed for stately courtesy:
But angry Dacre rather chose
In his pavilion to repose.

VI.

Now, noble Dame, perchance you ask,
How these two hostile armies met?
Deeming it were no easy task
To keep the truce which here was set;
Where martial spirits, all on fire,
Breathed only blood and mortal ire.—
By mutual inroads, mutual blows,
By habit, and by nation, foes,
They met on Teviot's strand;
They met and sate them mingled down,
Without a threat, without a frown,
As brothers meet in foreign land:
The hands, the spear that lately grasp'd,
Still in the mailed gauntlet clasp'd,
Were interchanged in greeting dear;
Visors were raised, and faces shown,
And many a friend, to friend made known,
Partook of social cheer.
Some drove the jolly bowl about;
With dice and draughts some chased the day,
And some, with many a merry shout,
In riot, revelry, and rout,
Pursued the foot-ball play.

VII.

Yet, be it known, had bugles blown,
Or sign of war been seen,
Those bands, so fair together ranged,
Those hands, so frankly interchanged,
Had dyed with gore the green:
The merry shout by Teviot-side
Had sunk in war-cries wild and wide,
And in the groan of death;
And whingers,* now in friendship bare,
The social meal to part and share,
Had found a bloody sheath.
'Twixt truce and war, such sudden change
Was not infrequent, nor held strange,
In the old Border-day:
But yet on Branksome's towers and town,
In peaceful merriment, sunk down
The sun's declining ray.

VIII.

The blithsome signs of wassel gay
Decay'd not with the dying day;
Soon through the latticed windows tall
Of lofty Branksome's lordly hall,
Divided square by shafts of stone,
Huge flakes of ruddy lustre shone;
Nor less the gilded rafters rang
With merry harp and beakers' clang:
And frequent, on the darkening plain,
Loud hollo, whoop, or whistle ran,
As bands, their stragglers to regain,
Give the shrill watchword of their clan;
And revellers, o'er their bowls, proclaim
Douglas' or Dacre's conquering name.

IX.

Less frequent heard, and fainter still,
At length the various clamours died:
And you might hear, from Branksome hill,
No sound but Teviot's rushing tide;
Save when the changing sentinel
The challenge of his watch could tell;
And save, where, through the dark profound,
The clanging axe and hammer's sound
Rung from the nether lawn;
For many a busy hand toil'd there,
Strong pales to shape, and beams to square,
The lists' dread barriers to prepare
Against the morrow's dawn.

X.

Margaret from hall did soon retreat,
Despite the Dame's reproving eye;
Nor mark'd she, as she left her seat,
Full many a stifled sigh;

* A sort of knife, or poniard.

For many a noble warrior strove
To win the Flower of Teviot's love,
And many a bold ally —
With throbbing head and anxious heart,
All in her lonely bower apart,
In broken sleep she lay
By times, from silken couch she rose,
While yet the banner'd hosts repose,
She view'd the dawning day
Of all the hundreds sunk to rest,
First woke the loveliest and the best

XI.

She gazed upon the inner court,
Which in the tower's tall shadow lay;
Where coursers' clang, and stamp, and snort,
Had rung the livelong yesterday;
Now still as death, till stalking slow,—
The jingling spurs announced his tread,—
A stately warrior pass'd below;
But when he raised his plumed head—
Blessed Mary! can it be?—
Secure, as if in Ousenam bowers,
He walks through Branksome's hostile towers,
With fearless step and free
She dared not sign, she dared not speak—
Oh! if one page's slumbers break,
His blood the price must pay!
Not all the pearls Queen Mary wears,
Not Margaret's yet more precious tears,
Shall buy his life a day

XII.

Yet was his hazard small; for well
You may bethink you of the spell
Of that sly urchin page;
This to his lord he did impart,
And made him seem, by glamour art,
A knight from Hermitage.
Unchallenged thus, the warder's post,
The court, unchallenged, thus he cross'd,
For all the vassalage·
But O! what magic's quaint disguise
Could blind fair Margaret's azure eyes!
She started from her seat;
While with surprise and fear she strove,
And both could scarcely master love—
Lord Henry's at her feet.

XIII

Oft have I mused, what purpose bad
That foul malicious urchin had
To bring this meeting round;
For happy love's a heavenly sight,
And by a vile malignant sprite
In such no joy is found;
And oft I've deem'd, perchance he thought
Their erring passion might have wrought
Sorrow, and sin, and shame;
And death to Cranstoun's gallant Knight,
And to the gentle ladye bright,
Disgrace, and loss of fame.
But earthly spirit could not tell
The heart of them that loved so well
True love's the gift which God has given
To man alone beneath the heaven:
It is not fantasy's hot fire,
Whose wishes, soon as granted, fly,
It liveth not in fierce desire,
With dead desire it doth not die,
It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
In body and in soul can bind.—
Now leave we Margaret and her Knight,
To tell you of the approaching fight.

XIV.

Their warning blasts the bugles blew,
The pipe's shrill port* aroused each clan,
In haste, the deadly strife to view,
The trooping warriors eager ran:
Thick round the lists their lances stood,
Like blasted pines in Ettrick Wood;
To Branksome many a look they threw
The combatants' approach to view,
And bandied many a word of boast,
About the Knight each favour'd most

XV.

Meantime full anxious was the Dame;
For now arose disputed claim,
Of who should fight for Deloraine,
'Twixt Harden and twixt Thirlestaine·
They 'gan to reckon kin and rent,
And frowning brow on brow was bent;

* A martial piece of music, adapted to the bagpipes.

But yet not long the strife—for, lo!
Himself, the Knight of Deloraine,
Strong, as it seem'd, and free from pain,
In armour sheath'd from top to toe,
Appear'd, and craved the combat due.
The Dame her charm successful knew,
And the fierce chiefs their claims withdrew.

XVI.

When for the lists they sought the plain,
The stately Ladye's silken rein
Did noble Howard hold;
Unarmed by her side he walk'd,
And much, in courteous phrase, they talk'd
Of feats of arms of old.
Costly his garb—his Flemish ruff
Fell o'er his doublet, shaped of buff,
With satin slash'd and lined;
Tawny his boot, and gold his spur,
His cloak was all of Poland fur,
His hose with silver twined;
His Bilboa blade, by Marchmen felt,
Hung in a broad and studded belt;
Hence, in rude phrase, the Borderers still
Call'd noble Howard, Belted Will.

XVII.

Behind Lord Howard and the Dame,
Fair Margaret on her palfrey came,
Whose foot-cloth swept the ground:
White was her wimple, and her veil,
And her loose locks a chaplet pale
Of whitest roses bound;
The lordly Angus, by her side,
In courtesy to cheer her tried;
Without his aid, her hand in vain
Had strove to guide her broider'd rein.
He deem'd, she shudder'd at the sight
Of warriors met for mortal fight;
But cause of terror, all unguess'd,
Was fluttering in her gentle breast,
When, in their chairs of crimson placed,
The Dame and she the barriers graced.

XVIII.

Prize of the field, the young Buccleuch,
An English knight led forth to view;
Scarce rued the boy his present plight,
So much he long'd to see the fight.
Within the lists, in knightly pride,
High Home and haughty Dacre ride;
Their leading staffs of steel they wield,
As marshals of the mortal field;
While to each knight their care assign'd
Like vantage of the sun and wind.
Then heralds hoarse did loud proclaim,
In King and Queen, and Warden's name,
That none, while lasts the strife,
Should dare, by look, or sign, or word,
Aid to a champion to afford,
On peril of his life;
And not a breath the silence broke,
Till thus the alternate Heralds spoke:—

XIX.

ENGLISH HERALD.

"Here standeth Richard of Musgrave,
Good knight and true, and freely born,
Amends from Deloraine to crave,
For foul despiteous scathe and scorn.
He sayeth, that William of Deloraine
Is traitor false by Border laws;
This with his sword he will maintain,
So help him God, and his good cause!"

XX.

SCOTTISH HERALD.

"Here standeth William of Deloraine,
Good knight and true, of noble strain,
Who sayeth, that foul treason's stain,
Since he bore arms, ne'er soil'd his coat;
And that, so help him God above!
He will on Musgrave's body prove,
He lies most foully in his throat."

LORD DACRE.

"Forward, brave champions, to the fight!
Sound trumpets!"—

LORD HOME.

—"God defend the right!"—
Then Teviot! how thine echoes rang,
When bugle-sound and trumpet-clang
Let loose the martial foes,
And in mid list, with shield poised high,
And measured step and wary eye,
The combatants did close.

XXI.

Ill would it suit your gentle ear,
Ye lovely listeners, to hear
How to the axe the helms did sound,
And blood pour'd down from many a
wound,
For desperate was the strife, and long,
And either warrior fierce and strong
But, were each dame a listening knight,
I well could tell how warriors fight!
For I have seen war's lightning flashing,
Seen the claymore with bayonet clashing,
Seen through red blood the war-horse
dashing,
And scorn'd, amid the reeling strife,
To yield a step for death or life —

XXII.

'Tis done, 'tis done! that fatal blow
Has stretch'd him on the bloody plain;
He strives to rise—Brave Musgrave, no!
Thence never shalt thou rise again!
He chokes in blood—some friendly hand
Undo the visor's barred band,
Unfix the gorget's iron clasp,
And give him room for life to gasp!
O, bootless aid!—haste, holy Friar,
Haste, ere the sinner shall expire!
Of all his guilt let him be shriven,
And smooth his path from earth to
heaven!

XXIII.

In haste the holy Friar sped.—
His naked foot was dyed with red,
As through the lists he ran:
Unmindful of the shouts on high,
That hail'd the conqueror's victory,
He raised the dying man;
Loose waved his silver beard and hair,
As o'er him he kneel'd down in prayer,
And still the crucifix on high
He holds before his darkening eye,
And still he bends an anxious ear,
His faltering penitence to hear,
Still props him from the bloody sod,
Still, even when soul and body part,
Pours ghostly comfort on his heart,
And bids him trust in God!
Unheard he prays;—the death-pang's
o'er!
Richard of Musgrave breathes no more.

XXIV.

As if exhausted in the fight,
Or musing o'er the piteous sight,
The silent victor stands;
His beaver did he not unclasp,
Mark'd not the shouts, felt not the grasp
Of gratulating hands
When lo! strange cries of wild surprise,
Mingled with seeming terror, rise
Among the Scottish bands;
And all, amid the throng'd array,
In panic haste gave open way
To a half-naked ghastly man,
Who downward from the castle ran:
He cross'd the barriers at a bound,
And wild and haggard look'd around,
As dizzy, and in pain;
And all, upon the armed ground,
Knew William of Deloraine!
Each ladye sprung from seat with speed
Vaulted each marshal from his steed,
"And who art thou," they cried,
"Who hast this battle fought and won?"
His plumed helm was soon undone—
"Cranstoun of Teviot-side!
For this fair prize I've fought and
won,"—
And to the Ladye led her son

XXV.

Full oft the rescued boy she kiss'd,
And often press'd him to her breast;
For, under all her dauntless show,
Her heart had throbb'd at every blow;
Yet not Lord Cranstoun deign'd she
greet,
Though low he kneeled at her feet.
Me lists not tell what words were made
What Douglas, Home, and Howard
said —
—For Howard was a generous foe—
And how the clan united pray'd
The Ladye would the feud forego,
And deign to bless the nuptial hour
Of Cranstoun's Lord and Teviot's
Flower.

XXVI.

She look'd to river, look'd to hill,
Thought on the Spirit's prophecy,
Then broke her silence stern and still,—
"Not you, but Fate, has vanquish'd
me;

Their influence kindly stars may shower
On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower,
For pride is quell'd, and love is free."—
She took fair Margaret by the hand,
Who, breathless, trembling, scarce might stand;
That hand to Cranstoun's lord gave she:—
"As I am true to thee and thine,
Do thou be true to me and mine!
This clasp of love our bond shall be;
For this is your betrothing day,
And all these noble lords shall stay,
To grace it with their company."—

XXVII.

All as they left the listed plain,
Much of the story she did gain;
How Cranstoun fought with Deloraine,
And of his page, and of the Book
Which from the wounded knight he took;
And how he sought her castle high,
That morn, by help of gramarye;
How, in Sir William's armour dight,
Stolen by his page, while slept the knight,
He took on him the single fight.
But half his tale he left unsaid,
And linger'd till he join'd the maid.—
Cared not the Ladye to betray
Her mystic arts in view of day;
But well she thought, ere midnight came,
Of that strange page the pride to tame,
From his foul hands the Book to save,
And send it back to Michael's grave.—
Needs not to tell each tender word
'Twixt Margaret and 'twixt Cranstoun's lord;
Nor how she told of former woes,
And how her bosom fell and rose,
While he and Musgrave bandied blows.—
Needs not these lovers' joys to tell:
One day, fair maids, you'll know them well.

XXVIII.

William of Deloraine, some chance
Had waken'd from his deathlike trance;
And taught that, in the listed plain,
Another, in his arms and shield,
Against fierce Musgrave axe did wield,
Under the name of Deloraine.
Hence, to the field, unarm'd, he ran,
And hence his presence scared the clan,
Who held him for some fleeting wraith,*
And not a man of blood and breath.
Not much this new ally he loved,
Yet, when he saw what hap had proved,
He greeted him right heartilie:
He would not waken old debate,
For he was void of rancorous hate,
Though rude, and scant of courtesy;
In raids he spilt but seldom blood,
Unless when men at arms withstood,
Or, as was meet, for deadly feud.
He ne'er bore grudge for stalwart blow,
Ta'en in fair fight from gallant foe:
And so 'twas seen of him, e'en now,
When on dead Musgrave he look'd down;
Grief darken'd on his rugged brow,
Though half disguised with a frown;
And thus, while sorrow bent his head,
His foeman's epitaph he made.—

XXIX.

"Now, Richard Musgrave, liest thou here!
I ween, my deadly enemy;
For, if I slew thy brother dear,
Thou slew'st a sister's son to me;
And when I lay in dungeon dark,
Of Naworth Castle, long months three,
Till ransom'd for a thousand mark,
Dark Musgrave, it was long of thee.
And, Musgrave, could our fight be tried,
And thou wert now alive, as I,
No mortal man should us divide,
Till one, or both of us, did die:
Yet rest thee God! for well I know
I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.
In all the northern counties here,
Whose word is Snaffle, spur, and spear,
Thou wert the best to follow gear!
'Twas pleasure, as we look'd behind,
To see how thou the chase could'st wind,
Cheer the dark blood hound on his way,
And with the bugle rouse the fray!
I'd give the lands of Deloraine,
Dark Musgrave were alive again."—

* The spectral apparition of a living person

XXX.

So mourn'd he, till Lord Dacre's band
Were bowning back to Cumberland.
They raised brave Musgrave from the field,
And laid him on his bloody shield,
On levell'd lances, four and four,
By turns, the noble burden bore
Before, at times, upon the gale,
Was heard the Minstrel's plaintive wail;
Behind, four priests, in sable stole,
Sung requiem for the warrior's soul·
Around, the horsemen slowly rode,
With trailing pikes the spearmen trode;
And thus the gallant knight they bore,
Through Liddesdale to Leven's shore;
Thence to Holme Coltrame's lofty nave,
And laid him in his father's grave.

THE harp's wild notes, though hush'd the song,
The mimic march of death prolong;
Now seems it far, and now a-near,
Now meets, and now eludes the ear;
Now seems some mountain side to sweep,
Now faintly dies in valley deep;
Seems now as if the Minstrel's wail,
Now the sad requiem, loads the gale;
Last, o'er the warrior's closing grave,
Rung the full choir in choral stave

After due pause, they bade him tell
Why he, who touch'd the harp so well,
Should thus, with ill-rewarded toil,
Wander a poor and thankless soil,
When the more generous Southern Land
Would well requite his skilful hand.

The Aged Harper, howsoe'er
His only friend, his harp, was dear,
Liked not to hear it rank'd so high
Above his flowing poesy:
Less liked he still, that scornful jeer
Misprised the land he loved so dear;
High was the sound, as thus again
The Bard resumed his minstrel strain.

CANTO SIXTH

I

BREATHES there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,
As home his footsteps he hath turn'd,
From wandering on a foreign strand!
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
For him no minstrel raptures swell,
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung

II

O Caledonia! stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child!
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band,
That knits me to thy rugged strand!
Still, as I view each well-known scene,
Think what is now, and what hath been,
Seems as, to me, of all bereft,
Sole friends thy woods and streams were left;
And thus I love them better still,
Even in extremity of ill.
By Yarrow's streams still let me stray,
Though none should guide my feeble way;
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my wither'd cheek;*
Still lay my head by Teviot Stone,
Though there, forgotten and alone,
The Bard may draw his parting groan.

III

Not scorn'd like me! to Branksome Hall
The Minstrels came, at festive call;
Trooping they came, from near and far,
The jovial priests of mirth and war,
Alike for feast and fight prepared,
Battle and banquet both they shared.
Of late, before each martial clan,
They blew their death-note in the van,

* This and the three following lines form the inscription on the monument to Scott in the market-place of Selkirk.

But now, for every merry mate,
Rose the portcullis' iron grate;
They sound the pipe, they strike the string,
They dance, they revel, and they sing,
Till the rude turrets shake and ring.

IV.

Me lists not at this tide declare
The splendour of the spousal rite,
How muster'd in the chapel fair
Both maid and matron, squire and knight;
Me lists not tell of owches rare,
Of mantles green, and braided hair,
And kirtles furr'd with miniver;
What plumage waved the altar round,
How spurs and ringing chainlets sound;
And hard it were for bard to speak
The changeful hue of Margaret's cheek;
That lovely hue which comes and flies,
As awe and shame alternate rise!

V.

Some bards have sung, the Ladye high
Chapel or altar came not nigh;
Nor durst the rites of spousal grace,
So much she fear'd each holy place.
False slanders these:—I trust right well
She wrought *not* by *forbidden* spell;
For mighty words and signs have power
O'er sprites in planetary hour:
Yet scarce I praise their venturous part,
Who tamper with such dangerous art.
But this for faithful truth I say,
The Ladye by the altar stood,
Of sable velvet her array,
And on her head a crimson hood,
With pearls embroider'd and entwined,
Guarded with gold, with ermine lined;
A merlin sat upon her wrist,
Held by a leash of silken twist.

VI.

The spousal rites were ended soon:
'Twas now the merry hour of noon,
And in the lofty arched hall
Was spread the gorgeous festival.
Steward and squire, with heedful haste,
Marshall'd the rank of every guest;
Pages, with ready blade, were there,
The mighty meal to carve and share:
O'er capon, heron-shew, and crane,
And princely peacock's gilded train,
And o'er the boar-head, garnish'd brave,
And cygnet from St. Mary's wave;
O'er ptarmigan and venison,
The priest had spoke his benison.
Then rose the riot and the din,
Above, beneath, without, within!
For, from the lofty balcony,
Rung trumpet, shalm, and psaltery:
Their clanging bowls old warriors quaff'd,
Loudly they spoke, and loudly laugh'd;
Whisper'd young knights, in tone more mild,
To ladies fair, and ladies smiled.
The hooded hawks, high perch'd on beam,
The clamour join'd with whistling scream,
And flapp'd their wings, and shook their bells,
In concert with the stag-hounds' yells.
Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
From Bordeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine;
Their tasks the busy sewers ply,
And all is mirth and revelry.

VII.

The Goblin Page, omitting still
No opportunity of ill,
Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,
To rouse debate and jealousy;
Till Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein,
By nature fierce, and warm with wine,
And now in humour highly cross'd,
About some steeds his band had lost,
High words to words succeeding still,
Smote, with his gauntlet, stout Hunthill;
A hot and hardy Rutherford,
Whom men called Dickon Draw-the-sword.
He took it on the page's saye,
Hunthill had driven these steeds away.
Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose,
The kindling discord to compose:
Stern Rutherford right little said,
But bit his glove, and shook his head.—
A fortnight thence, in Inglewood,
Stout Conrade, cold, and drench'd in blood,

His bosom gored with many a wound,
Was by a woodman's lyme-dog found;
Unknown the manner of his death,
Gone was his brand, both sword and sheath;
But ever from that time 'twas said,
That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

VIII.

The dwarf, who fear'd his master's eye
Might his foul treachery espie,
Now sought the castle buttery,
Where many a yeoman, bold and free,
Revell'd as merrily and well
As those that sat in lordly selle
Watt Tinlinn, there, did frankly raise
The pledge to Arthur Fire-the-Braes,
And he, as by his breeding bound,
To Howard's merry-men sent it round
To quit them, on the English side,
Red Roland Forster loudly cried,
"A deep carouse to yon fair bride."—
At every pledge, from vat and pail,
Foam'd forth in floods the nut-brown ale;
While shout the riders every one·
Such day of mirth ne'er cheered their clan,
Since old Buccleuch the name did gain,
When in the cleuch the buck was ta'en

IX.

The wily page, with vengeful thought,
Remember'd him of Tinlinn's yew,
And swore, it should be dearly bought
That ever he the arrow drew.
First, he the yeoman did molest,
With bitter gibe and taunting jest;
Told, how he fled at Solway strife,
And how Hob Armstrong cheer'd his wife;
Then, shunning still his powerful arm,
At unawares he wrought him harm;
From trencher stole his choicest cheer,
Dash'd from his lips his can of beer,
Then, to his knee sly creeping on,
With bodkin pierc'd him to the bone:
The venom'd wound, and festering joint,
Long after rued that bodkin's point.
The startled yeoman swore and spurn'd,
And board and flagons overturn'd.

Riot and clamour wild began;
Back to the hall the Urchin ran;
Took in a darkling nook his post,
And grinn'd, and mutter'd, "Lost! lost! lost!"

X.

By this, the Dame, lest farther fray
Should mar the concord of the day,
Had bid the Minstrels tune their lay.
And first stept forth old Albert Græme,
The Minstrel of that ancient name·
Was none who struck the harp so well,
Within the Land Debateable;
Well friended, too, his hardy kin,
Whoever lost, were sure to win:
They sought the beeves that made their broth,
In Scotland and in England both
In homely guise, as nature bade,
His simple song the Borderer said

XI

ALBERT GRÆME.

It was an English ladye bright,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall)
And she would marry a Scottish knight,
For Love will still be lord of all.

Blithely they saw the rising sun,
When he shone fair on Carlisle wall,
But they were sad ere day was done,
Though Love was still the lord of all.

Her sire gave brooch and jewel fine,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
Her brother gave but a flask of wine,
For ire that Love was lord of all.

For she had lands, both meadow and lea,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
And he swore her death, ere he would see
A Scottish knight the lord of all.

XII

That wine she had not tasted well,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
When dead, in her true love's arms, she fell,
For Love was still the lord of all!

e pierced her brother to the heart,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall :—
o perish all would true love part,
That Love may still be lord of all!

nd then he took the cross divine,
(Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
nd died for her sake in Palestine;
So Love was still the lord of all.

ow all ye lovers, that faithful prove,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
ay for their souls who died for love,
For Love shall still be lord of all!

XIII.

s ended Albert's simple lay,
Arose a bard of loftier port;
r sonnet, rhyme, and roundelay,
Renown'd in haughty Henry's court
ere rung thy harp, unrivall'd long,
tztraver of the silver song!
The gentle Surrey loved his lyre—
Who has not heard of Surrey's fame?
His was the hero's soul of fire,
And his the bard's immortal name,
nd his was love, exalted high
all the glow of chivalry.

XIV.

They sought, together, climes afar,
And oft, within some olive grove,
When even came with twinkling star,
They sung of Surrey's absent love.
His step the Italian peasant stay'd,
And deem'd that spirits from on high,
Round where some hermit saint was laid,
Were breathing heavenly melody;
So sweet did harp and voice combine,
To praise the name of Geraldine.

XV.

Fitztraver! O what tongue may say
The pangs thy faithful bosom knew,
When Surrey, of the deathless lay,
Ungrateful Tudor's sentence slew?
Regardless of the tyrant's frown,
His harp call'd wrath and vengeance down.
He left, for Naworth's iron towers,
Windsor's green glades, and courtly bowers,
And, faithful to his patron's name,
With Howard still Fitztraver came;
Lord William's foremost favourite he,
And chief of all his minstrelsy.

XVI.

FITZTRAVER.

'Twas All-soul's eve, and Surrey's heart beat high;
He heard the midnight bell with anxious start,
Which told the mystic hour, approaching nigh,
When wise Cornelius promised, by his art,
To show to him the ladye of his heart,
Albeit betwixt them roar'd the ocean grim;
Yet so the sage had hight to play his part,
That he should see her form in life and limb,
And mark, if still she loved, and still she thought of him.

XVII.

Dark was the vaulted room of gramarye,
To which the wizard led the gallant Knight,
Save that before a mirror, huge and high,
A hallow'd taper shed a glimmering light
On mystic implements of magic might;
On cross, and character, and talisman,
And almagest, and altar, nothing bright:
For fitful was the lustre, pale and wan,
As watchlight by the bed of some departing man.

XVIII.

But soon, within that mirror huge and high,
Was seen a self-emitted light to gleam,
And forms upon its breast the Earl 'gan spy,
Cloudy and indistinct, as feverish dream;
Till, slow arranging, and defined, they seem
To form a lordly and a lofty room,
Part lighted by a lamp with silver beam,
Placed by a couch of Agra's silken loom,
And part by moonshine pale, and part was hid in gloom

XIX.

Fair all the pageant—but how passing fair
The slender form, which lay on couch of Ind!
O'er her white bosom stray'd her hazel hair,
Pale her dear cheek, as if for love she pined;
All in her night-robe loose she lay reclined,
And, pensive, read from tablet eburnine,
Some strain that seem'd her inmost soul to find.—
That favour'd strain was Surrey's raptured line,
That fair and lovely form, the Lady Geraldine.

XX.

Slow roll'd the clouds upon the lovely form,
And swept the goodly vision all away—
So royal envy roll'd the murky storm
O'er my beloved Master's glorious day.
Thou jealous, ruthless tyrant! Heaven repay
On thee, and on thy children's latest line,
The wild caprice of thy despotic sway,
The gory bridal bed, the plunder'd shrine,
The murder'd Surrey's blood, the tears of Geraldine!

XXI

Both Scots, and Southern chiefs, prolong
Applauses of Fitztraver's song,
These hated Henry's name as death,
And those still held the ancient faith —
Then, from his seat, with lofty air,
Rose Harold, bard of brave St Clair;
St Clair, who, feasting high at Home,
Had with that lord to battle come.
Harold was born where restless seas
Howl round the storm-swept Orcades;
Where erst St Clairs held princely sway
O'er isle and islet, strait and bay,—
Still nods their palace to its fall,
Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirkwall!—
Thence oft he mark'd fierce Pentland rave,
As if grim Odin rode her wave;
And watch'd, the whilst, with visage pale,
And throbbing heart, the struggling sail;
For all of wonderful and wild
Had rapture for the lonely child

XXII

And much of wild and wonderful
In these rude isles might fancy cull;
For thither came, in times afar,
Stern Lochlin's sons of roving war,
The Norsemen, train'd to spoil and blood,
Skill'd to prepare the raven's food;
Kings of the main their leaders brave,
Their barks the dragons of the wave
And there, in many a stormy vale,
The Scald had told his wondrous tale,

And many a Runic column high
Had witnessed grim idolatry.
And thus had Harold, in his youth,
Learn'd many a Saga's rhyme uncouth,—
Of that Sea-Snake, tremendous curl'd,
Whose monstrous circle girds the world;
Of those dread Maids, whose hideous yell
Maddens the battle's bloody swell;
Of Chiefs, who, guided through the gloom
By the pale death-lights of the tomb,
Ransack'd the graves of warriors old,
Their falchions wrench'd from corpses' hold,
Waked the deaf tomb with war's alarms,
And bade the dead arise to arms!
With war and wonder all on flame,
To Roslin's bowers young Harold came,
Where, by sweet glen and greenwood tree,
He learn'd a milder minstrelsy;
Yet something of the Northern spell
Mix'd with the softer numbers well.

XXIII.

HAROLD.

O listen, listen, ladies gay!
No haughty feat of arms I tell;
Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

"Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!
And, gentle ladye, deign to stay!
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

"The blackening wave is edged with white,
To inch* and rock the sea-mews fly;
The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,
Whose screams forebode that wreck is nigh.

"Last night the gifted Seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay;
Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch:
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?"—

"'Tis not because Lord Lindesay's heir
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my ladye-mother there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

* *Inch*, isle.

"'Tis not because the ring they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide,
If 'tis not fill'd by Rosabelle."—

O'er Roslin all that dreary night,
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,
And redder than the bright moonbeam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen;
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,
And seen from cavern'd Hawthornden.

Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd lie,
Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply.

Seem'd all on fire within, around,
Deep sacristy and altar's pale;
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair—
So still they blaze, when fate is nigh
The lordly line of high St Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
Lie buried within that proud chapelle;
Each one the holy vault doth hold—
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle.

And each St Clair was buried there,
With candle, with book, and with knell;
But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds sung,
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle!

XXIV.

So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,
Scarce mark'd the guests the darken'd hall,
Though, long before the sinking day,
A wondrous shade involved them all:
It was not eddying mist or fog,
Drain'd by the sun from fen or bog;
Of no eclipse had sages told;
And yet, as it came on apace,
Each one could scarce his neighbour's face,
Could scarce his own stretch'd hand behold.

A secret horror check'd the feast,
And chill'd the soul of every guest;
Even the high Dame stood half aghast,
She knew some evil on the blast;
The elvish page fell to the ground,
And, shuddering, mutter'd, "Found! found! found!"

XXV.

Then sudden, through the darken'd air
A flash of lightning came,
So broad, so bright, so red the glare,
The castle seem'd on flame
Glanced every rafter of the hall,
Glanced every shield upon the wall;
Each trophied beam, each sculptured stone,
Were instant seen, and instant gone;
Full through the guests' bedazzled band
Resistless flash'd the levin-brand,
And fill'd the hall with smouldering smoke,
As on the elvish page it broke.
It broke with thunder long and loud,
Dismay'd the brave, appall'd the proud,—
From sea to sea the larum rung;
On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal,
To arms the startled warders sprung
When ended was the dreadful roar,
The elvish dwarf was seen no more!

XXVI.

Some heard a voice in Branksome Hall,
Some saw a sight, not seen by all,
That dreadful voice was heard by some,
Cry, with loud summons, "GYLBIN, COME!"
And on the spot where burst the brand,
Just where the page had flung him down,
Some saw an arm, and some a hand,
And some the waving of a gown
The guests in silence prayed and shook,
And terror dimm'd each lofty look
But none of all the astonished train
Was so dismay'd as Deloraine.
His blood did freeze, his brain did burn,
'Twas fear'd his mind would ne'er return;
For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,
Like him of whom the story ran,
Who spoke the spectre-hound in Man
At length, by fits, he darkly told,
With broken hint, and shuddering cold—
That he had seen right certainly,
A shape with amice wrapp'd around,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like pilgrim from beyond the sea;
And knew—but how it matter'd not—
It was the wizard, Michael Scott

XXVII.

The anxious crowd, with horror pale,
All trembling heard the wondrous tale,
No sound was made, no word was spoke,
Till noble Angus silence broke;
And he a solemn sacred plight
Did to St Bride of Douglas make,
That he a pilgrimage would take,
To Melrose Abbey, for the sake
Of Michael's restless sprite.
Then each, to ease his troubled breast,
To some bless'd saint his prayers address'd.
Some to St Modan made their vows,
Some to St Mary of the Lowes,
Some to the Holy Rood of Lisle,
Some to our Ladye of the Isle,
Each did his patron witness make,
That he such pilgrimage would take,
And monks should sing, and bells should toll,
All for the weal of Michael's soul
While vows were ta'en, and prayers were pray'd,
'Tis said the noble dame, dismay'd,
Renounced, for aye, dark magic's aid.

XXVIII

Nought of the bridal will I tell,
Which after in short space befell
Nor how brave sons and daughters fair
Bless'd Teviot's Flower, and Cranstoun's heir
After such dreadful scene, 'twere vain
To wake the note of mirth again
More meet it were to mark the day
Of penitence, and prayer divine.
When pilgrim-chiefs, in sad array
Sought Melrose' holy shrine.

XXIX.

With naked foot, and sackcloth vest,
And arms enfolded on his breast,
Did every pilgrim go;
The standers-by might hear uneath,
Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn breath,
Through all the lengthen'd row:
No lordly look, nor martial stride;
Gone was their glory, sunk their pride,
Forgotten their renown,
Silent and slow, like ghosts they glide
To the high altar's hallow'd side,
And there they knelt them down.
Above the suppliant chieftains wave
The banners of departed brave,
Beneath the letter'd stones were laid
The ashes of their fathers dead;
From many a garnish'd niche around,
Stern saints and tortured martyrs frown'd.

XXX.

And slow up the dim aisle afar,
With sable cowl and scapular,
And snow-white stoles, in order due,
The holy Fathers, two and two,
In long procession came;
Taper, and host, and book they bare,
And holy banner, flourish'd fair
With the Redeemer's name
Above the prostrate pilgrim band
The mitred Abbot stretch'd his hand,
And bless'd them as they kneel'd;
With holy cross he signed them all,
And pray'd they might be sage in hall,
And fortunate in field.
Then mass was sung, and prayers were said,
And solemn requiem for the dead;
And bells toll'd out their mighty peal,
For the departed spirit's weal;
And ever in the office close
The hymn of intercession rose;
And far the echoing aisles prolong
The awful burthen of the song—
DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA,
SOLVET SÆCLUM IN FAVILLA;
While the pealing organ rung;
Were it meet with sacred strain
To close my lay, so light and vain,
Thus the holy Fathers sung:—

XXXI.

HYMN FOR THE DEAD.

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away,
What power shall be the sinner's stay?
How shall he meet that dreadful day?
When, shrivelling like a parched scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll,
When louder yet, and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead!
Oh! on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be THOU the trembling sinner's stay,
Though heaven and earth shall pass away!

HUSH'D is the harp—the Minstrel gone.
And did he wander forth alone?
Alone, in indigence and age,
To linger out his pilgrimage?
No!—close beneath proud Newark's tower,
Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower;
A simple hut, but there was seen
The little garden hedged with green,
The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.
There shelter'd wanderers, by the blaze,
Oft heard the tale of other days,
For much he loved to ope his door,
And give the aid he begg'd before
So pass'd the winter's day; but still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
And July's eve, with balmy breath,
Wav'd the blue-bells on Newark heath;
When throstles sung in Harehead shaw,
And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
And flourish'd, broad, Blackandro's oak,
The aged Harper's soul awoke!
Then would he sing achievements high,
And circumstance of chivalry,
Till the rapt traveller would stay,
Forgetful of the closing day,
And noble youths the strain to hear,
Forsook the hunting of the deer,
And Yarrow, as he roll'd along,
Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.

MARMION.

A TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD.

IN SIX CANTOS.

Alas! that Scottish maid should sing
The combat where her lover fell!
That Scottish Bard should wake the string,
The triumph of our foes to tell!

LEYDEN.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY, LORD MONTAGUE,

&c. &c. &c.

THIS ROMANCE IS INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST EDITION.

It is hardly to be expected, that an Author whom the public have honoured wit some degree of applause, should not be again a trespasser on their kindness. Yet th Author of MARMION *must be supposed to feel some anxiety concerning its succes since he is sensible that he hazards, by this second intrusion, any reputation whic his first Poem may have procured him. The present story turns upon the priva adventures of a fictitious character; but is called a Tale of Flodden Field, becau the hero's fate is connected with that memorable defeat, and the causes which led to i The design of the Author was, if possible, to apprize his readers, at the outset, of th date of his Story, and to prepare them for the manners of the Age in which it is lai Any Historical Narrative, far more an attempt at Epic composition, exceeded h plan of a Romantic Tale; yet he may be permitted to hope, from the popularity o* THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL, *that an attempt to paint the manners of th feudal times, upon a broader scale, and in the course of a more interesting story, wi not be unacceptable to the Public.*

The Poem opens about the commencement of August, and concludes with the defe of Flodden, 9th September, 1513.

ASHESTIEL, 1808

MARMION.

After a success so brilliant and profitable as that which had been attained by the "Lay," it was only natural that a young and ambitious writer should be tempted quickly to resume his addresses to the muse especially in the circumstances in which Scott was placed. He saw before him little prospect of advancement in his profession, for the practice of which he had never felt any inclination, and which continued to become more distasteful to him. Having to choose between literature and law, he was ready to decide in favour of the former, had not the sheriffship which he obtained in Dec 1799, and the reversion of the clerkship of Session, which was assigned to him a few years later, enabled him to take a middle course, to apply himself to letters without rendering himself dependent for an income on the profits of his pen. The good fortune which crowned his first serious essay in literature confirmed the resolution, and another poem was quickly planned. With characteristic prudence Scott had determined not to be too hasty in this second venture, and to bestow upon it the thought and polish which the public would naturally expect from an author of his reputation. Some pecuniary embarrassment on the part of his brother Thomas caused him to break this cautious resolution. Constable, in association with some of the London booksellers, was quite willing to pay down a thousand pounds for the unwritten poem, and Scott was thus enabled to assist his brother in his difficulties. Byron, unaware of the generous purpose to which Scott applied the money, affected to be shocked at the mercenary nature of the bargain. The publishers, however, were only too glad to enter into the arrangement, and they were certainly no losers by their confidence and liberality. Commenced in Nov 1806, "Marmion" was ready for the press in February, 1808. Two thousand copies of the first edition in quarto, at a guinea and a half, were disposed of in a month. A second edition, of 3,000 copies, immediately followed, and two other editions, each of the same extent, were called for before the end of 1809. By the beginning of 1836 as many as 50,000 copies had been disposed of.

Large as was the circulation of "Marmion," it can hardly be said to have been read with the same relish as the "Lay," yet it was in many respects an advance. Even Jeffrey, who was very severe on the defects of the second poem, is disposed to admit that if it has greater faults it has also greater beauties. "It has more flat and tedious passages, and more ostentation of historical and antiquarian lore, but it has also greater richness and variety, both of character and incident, and if it has less sweetness and pathos in the softer passages, it has certainly more vehemence and force of colouring in the loftier and busier representations of action and emotion . . . more airiness and brightness in the higher delineations." Scott himself has acknowledged, in the preface of 1830, one of the chief defects of the story, although he endeavoured to justify it in a note. This was the combination of mean felony with so many noble qualities in the character of the hero, especially as the crime belonged rather to a commercial than a proud, warlike, and uninstructed age. Leyden, amongst others, was furious at this

oversight, and Scott owns that it ought to have been remedied or palliated "Yet I suffered the tree," he says, "to lie as it had fallen, being satisfied that corrections, however judicious, have a bad effect after publication"

The letters prefixed to each canto were also a mistake in an artistic point of view. Every one will agree with Southey in wishing them "at the end of the volume, or the beginning, anywhere except where they are," and the best advice we can give the reader is, not to allow them to interrupt his perusal of the poem, but to regard them as independent pieces Indeed, it was in this character they were originally intended to appear, and as such were advertised under the title of "Six Epistles from Ettrick Forest." Of the persons to whom the letters are addressed a few notes may be interesting Mr W. Stewart Rose was the author of "Letters from Rome," a translation of Ariosto, and other works—a genial, cultivated man, whose social qualities were higher than his literary powers Scott not only met him frequently in London, but visited him at his marine villa, Gundimore, in Hampshire The Rev. John Marriott was tutor to Lord Scott, the young heir of Buccleuch, to whom there is an allusion in the poem, and who died a few days after it was published William Erskine, afterwards Lord Kinnedder, was one of Scott's oldest and most valued friends Lockhart describes very forcibly the difference in their character and temperament; Scott being strong, active, and passionately fond of rough bodily exercise, while Erskine was "a little man of feeble make, who seemed unhappy when his pony got beyond a foot pace . . . who used to shudder when he saw a party equipped for coursing, as if murder were in the wind His small, elegant features, hectic cheek, and soft hazel eyes, were the index of the quick, sensitive gentle spirit within He had the warm heart of a woman, her generous enthusiasm, and some of her weaknesses A beautiful landscape, or a fine strain of music, would send the tears rolling down the cheek; and, though capable, I have no doubt, of exhibiting, had his duty called him to do so, the highest spirit of a hero or a martyr, he had very little command over his nerves amidst circumstances such as men of ordinary mould (to say nothing of iron fabrics like Scott's) regard with indifference" Slow advancement at the bar somewhat soured his temper, he shrank from general society, and moved only in a narrow circle of intimate friends This retiring habit clung to him after he had obtained the long-coveted seat on the bench He was at heart a generous, kindly man His conversation, somewhat formal and precise, was rich in knowledge, and his taste and keen criticism were very valuable to his friend Mr James Skene, of Rubislaw, near Aberdeen, was another early friend of Scott, who had encouraged him in his German studies, and shared his military enthusiasm in the days of the expected invasion Scott speaks of him in one of his letters as "distinguished for his attainments as a draughtsman, and for his highly gentlemanlike feelings and character Admirable in all exercises, there entered a good deal of the cavalier into his early character." Mr George Ellis is well known as the editor of a number of antiquarian works He was a frequent correspondent and valued adviser of Scott. Richard Heber was brother of the Bishop and poet of the same name He was long Member of Parliament for the University of Oxford, and a man of culture and social position His knowledge of Middle Age literature and extensive library were of great assistance to Scott in the compilation of the Border *Minstrelsy* Once, after a long convivial night in Edinburgh, he and Scott climbed to the top of Arthur's Seat in the moonlight, coming down to breakfast with a rare appetite.

The topography of "Marmion" is so fully illustrated in the notes, that it is scarcely needful here to do more than indicate them.—Norham Castle, p. 504, Lindisfarne, p 510, Gifford Castle, p 512, Crichtoun Castle, p 514, the Borough

Moor, p. 515; Tantallon Castle, p. 517; Edinburgh Cross, p. 517. The route by which "Marmion" is carried to Edinburgh was made the subject of good-natured banter by some of Scott's friends. "Why," said one of them, "did ever mortal coming from England to Edinburgh, go by Gifford, Crichton Castle, Borthwick Castle, and over the top of Blackford Hill? Not only is it a circuitous *détour*, but there never was a road that way since the world was created." "That is a most irrelevant objection," replied Scott; "it was my good pleasure to bring Marmion by that route, for the purpose of describing the places you have mentioned, and the view from Blackford Hill—it was his business to find his road, and pick his steps the best way he could." In the poem, however, another reason is suggested for the route chosen:—

> "There [illegible] the Lowland road,
> For the Merse forayers were abroad,
> Who, fired with hate and thirst of prey,
> Had scarcely failed to bar the way."

It was at the suggestion of the friend who offered the above criticism (Mr. Guthrie Wright) that Scott took his hero back by Tantallon.

MARMION.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIRST.

TO WILLIAM STEWART ROSE, Esq

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest

November's sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sear.
Late, gazing down the steepy linn,
That hems our little garden in.
Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled greenwood grew,
So feeble trill'd the streamlet through
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen
Through bush and brier, no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
And, foaming brown with doubled speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed

No longer Autumn's glowing red
Upon our Forest hills is shed,
No more, beneath the evening beam,
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam:
Away hath passed the heather-bell
That bloom'd so rich on Needpath Fell,
Sallow his brow, and russet bare
Are now the sister-heights of Yair.
The sheep, before the pinching heaven,
To shelter'd dale and down are driven,
Where yet some faded herbage *pines*,
And yet a watery sunbeam shines:
In meek despondency they eye
The wither'd sward and wintry sky,
And far beneath their summer hill,
Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill.
The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,
And wraps him closer from the cold,
His dogs no merry circles wheel,
But, shivering, follow at his heel;
A cowering glance they often cast,
As deeper moans the gathering blast.

My imps, though hardy, bold and wild,
As best befits the mountain child,
Feel the sad influence of the hour,
And wail the daisy's vanished flower;
Their summer gambols tell, and mourn,
And anxious ask,—Will spring return,
And birds and lambs again be gay,
And blossoms clothe the hawthorn spray?

Yes, prattlers, yes The daisy's flower
Again shall paint your summer bower,
Again the hawthorn shall supply
The garland, you delight to tie,
The lambs upon the lea shall bound,
The wild birds carol to the round,
And while you frolic light as they,
Too short shall seem the summer day

To mute and to material things
New life revolving summer brings;
The genial call dead Nature hears,
And in her glory reappears
But oh! my Country's wintry state
What second spring shall renovate?
What powerful call shall bid arise
The buried warlike and the wise;
The mind that thought for Britain's weal,
The hand that grasp'd the victor steel?
The vernal sun new life bestows
Even on the meanest flower that blows,
But vainly, vainly may he shine,
Where glory weeps o'er NELSON's shrine,
And vainly pierce the solemn gloom,
That shrouds, O PITT, thy hallowed tomb!

Deep graved in every British heart,
O never let those names depart!

Say to your sons,—Lo, here his grave,
Who victor died on Gadite wave;*
To him, as to the burning levin,
Short, bright, resistless course was given.
Where'er his country's foes were found,
Was heard the fated thunder's sound,
Till burst the bolt on yonder shore,
Roll'd, blazed, destroy'd,—and was no more.

Nor mourn ye less his perish'd worth,
Who bade the conqueror go forth,
And launch'd that thunderbolt of war
On Egypt, Hafnia,† Trafalgar.
Who, born to guide such high emprize,
For Britain's weal was early wise;
Alas! to whom the Almighty gave,
For Britain's sins, an early grave!
His worth, who, in his mightiest hour,
A bauble held the pride of power,
Spurn'd at the sordid lust of pelf,
And served his Albion for herself;
Who, when the frantic crowd amain
Strain'd at subjection's bursting rein,
O'er their wild mood full conquest gain'd,
The pride, he would not crush, restrain'd,
Show'd their fierce zeal a worthier cause,
And brought the freeman's arm, to aid the freeman's laws.

Had'st thou but lived, though stripp'd of power,
A watchman on the lonely tower,
Thy thrilling trump had roused the land,
When fraud or danger were at hand;
By thee, as by the beacon-light,
Our pilots had kept course aright;
As some proud column, though alone,
Thy strength had propp'd the tottering throne:
Now is the stately column broke,
The beacon-light is quench'd in smoke,
The trumpet's silver sound is still,
The warder silent on the hill!

Oh think, how to his latest day,
When Death, just hovering, claim'd his prey,
With Palinure's unalter'd mood,
Firm at his dangerous post he stood;

Each call for needful rest repell'd,
With dying hand the rudder held,
Till, in his fall, with fateful sway,
The steerage of the realm gave way!
Then, while on Britain's thousand plains,
One unpolluted church remains,
Whose peaceful bells ne'er sent around
The bloody tocsin's maddening sound,
But still, upon the hallow'd day,
Convoke the swains to praise and pray;
While faith and civil peace are dear,
Grace this cold marble with a tear,—
He, who preserved them, PITT, lies here!

Nor yet suppress the generous sigh,
Because his rival slumbers nigh;
Nor be thy *requiescat* dumb,
Lest it be said o'er Fox's tomb.
For talents mourn, untimely lost,
When best employ'd, and wanted most;
Mourn genius high, and lore profound,
And wit that loved to play, not wound;
And all the reasoning powers divine,
To penetrate, resolve, combine;
And feelings keen, and fancy's glow,—
They sleep with him who sleeps below:
And, if thou mourn'st they could not save
From error him who owns this grave,
Be every harsher thought suppress'd,
And sacred be the last long rest.
Here, where the end of earthly things
Lays heroes, patriots, bards, and kings;
Where stiff the hand, and still the tongue,
Of those who fought, and spoke, and sung;
Here, where the fretted aisles prolong
The distant notes of holy song,
As if some angel spoke agen,
"All peace on earth, good will to men;"
If ever from an English heart,
O, *here* let prejudice depart,
And, partial feeling cast aside,
Record, that Fox a Briton died!
When Europe crouch'd to France's yoke,
And Austria bent, and Prussia broke,
And the firm Russian's purpose brave,
Was barter'd by a timorous slave,
Even then dishonour's peace he spurn'd,
The sullied olive branch return'd,
Stood for his country's glory fast,
And nail'd her colours to the mast!

* Nelson † *Copenhagen*

MARMION.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIRST.

TO WILLIAM STEWART ROSE, Esq

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest

NOVEMBER'S sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sear:
Late, gazing down the steepy linn,
That hems our little garden in,
Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled greenwood grew,
So feeble trill'd the streamlet through:
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen
Through bush and brier, no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
And, foaming brown with doubled speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed

No longer Autumn's glowing red
Upon our Forest hills is shed;
No more, beneath the evening beam,
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam
Away hath passed the heather-bell
That bloom'd so rich on Needpath Fell;
Sallow his brow, and russet bare
Are now the sister-heights of Yair.
The sheep, before the pinching heaven,
To shelter'd dale and down are driven,
Where yet some faded herbage pines,
And yet a watery sunbeam shines
In meek despondency they eye
The wither'd sward and wintry sky,
And far beneath their summer hill,
Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill
The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,
And wraps him closer from the cold;
His dogs no merry circles wheel,
But, shivering, follow at his heel;
A cowering glance they often cast,
As deeper moans the gathering blast.

My imps, though hardy, bold and wild,
As best befits the mountain child,
Feel the sad influence of the hour,
And wail the daisy's vanished flower,
Their summer gambols tell, and mourn,
And anxious ask,—Will spring return,
And birds and lambs again be gay,
And blossoms clothe the hawthorn spray?

Yes, prattlers, yes The daisy's flower
Again shall paint your summer bower;
Again the hawthorn shall supply
The garlands you delight to tie;
The lambs upon the lea shall bound,
The wild birds carol to the round,
And while you frolic light as they,
Too short shall seem the summer day

To mute and to material things
New life revolving summer brings;
The genial call dead Nature hears,
And in her glory reappears.
But oh! my Country's wintry state
What second spring shall renovate?
What powerful call shall bid arise
The buried warlike and the wise;
The mind that thought for Britain's weal,
The hand that grasp'd the victor steel?
The vernal sun new life bestows
Even on the meanest flower that blows
But vainly, vainly may he shine,
Where glory weeps o'er NELSON'S shrine,
And vainly pierce the solemn gloom,
That shrouds, O PITT, thy hallowed tomb!

Deep graved in every British heart,
O never let those names depart!

Say to your sons,—Lo, here his grave,
Who victor died on Gadite wave;*
To him, as to the burning levin,
Short, bright, resistless course was given.
Where'er his country's foes were found,
Was heard the fated thunder's sound,
Till burst the bolt on yonder shore,
Roll'd, blazed, destroy'd,—and was no more.

Nor mourn ye less his perish'd worth,
Who bade the conqueror go forth,
And launch'd that thunderbolt of war
On Egypt, Hafnia,† Trafalgar;
Who, born to guide such high emprize,
For Britain's weal was early wise;
Alas! to whom the Almighty gave,
For Britain's sins, an early grave!
His worth, who, in his mightiest hour,
A bauble held the pride of power,
Spurn'd at the sordid lust of pelf,
And served his Albion for herself;
Who, when the frantic crowd amain
Strain'd at subjection's bursting rein,
O'er their wild mood full conquest gain'd,
The pride, he would not crush, restrain'd,
Show'd their fierce zeal a worthier cause,
And brought the freeman's arm, to aid the freeman's laws.

Had'st thou but lived, though stripp'd of power,
A watchman on the lonely tower,
Thy thrilling trump had roused the land,
When fraud or danger were at hand;
By thee, as by the beacon-light,
Our pilots had kept course aright;
As some proud column, though alone,
Thy strength had propp'd the tottering throne.
Now is the stately column broke,
The beacon-light is quench'd in smoke,
The trumpet's silver sound is still,
The warder silent on the hill!

Oh think, how to his latest day,
When Death, just hovering, claim'd his prey,
With Palinure's unalter'd mood,
Firm at his dangerous post he stood;
Each call for needful rest repell'd,
With dying hand the rudder held,
Till, in his fall, with fateful sway,
The steerage of the realm gave way!
Then, while on Britain's thousand plains,
One unpolluted church remains,
Whose peaceful bells ne'er sent around
The bloody tocsin's maddening sound,
But still, upon the hallow'd day,
Convoke the swains to praise and pray;
While faith and civil peace are dear,
Grace this cold marble with a tear,—
He, who preserved them, PITT, lies here!

Nor yet suppress the generous sigh,
Because his rival slumbers nigh;
Nor be thy *requiescat* dumb,
Lest it be said o'er Fox's tomb.
For talents mourn, untimely lost,
When best employ'd, and wanted most;
Mourn genius high, and lore profound,
And wit that loved to play, not wound;
And all the reasoning powers divine,
To penetrate, resolve, combine;
And feelings keen, and fancy's glow,—
They sleep with him who sleeps below:
And, if thou mourn'st they could not save
From error him who owns this grave,
Be every harsher thought suppress'd,
And sacred be the last long rest.
Here, where the end of earthly things
Lays heroes, patriots, bards, and kings;
Where stiff the hand, and still the tongue,
Of those who fought, and spoke, and sung;
Here, where the fretted aisles prolong
The distant notes of holy song,
As if some angel spoke agen,
"All peace on earth, good-will to men;"
If ever from an English heart,
O, *here* let prejudice depart,
And, partial feeling cast aside,
Record, that Fox a Briton died!
When Europe crouch'd to France's yoke,
And Austria bent, and Prussia broke,
And the firm Russian's purpose brave,
Was barter'd by a timorous slave,
Even then dishonour's peace he spurn'd,
The sullied olive-branch return'd,
Stood for his country's glory fast,
And nail'd her colours to the mast!

* Nelson. † Copenhagen.

CANTO FIRST.

The Castle.

I.

Day set on Norham's castled steep,
And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,
And Cheviot's mountains lone:
The battled towers, the donjon keep,
The loophole grates, where captives weep,
The flanking walls that round it sweep,
In yellow lustre shone.
The warriors on the turrets high,
Moving athwart the evening sky,
Seem'd forms of giant height:
Their armour, as it caught the rays,
Flash'd back again the western blaze,
In lines of dazzling light.

II.

Saint George's banner, broad and gay,
Now faded, as the fading ray
Less bright, and less, was flung;
The evening gale had scarce the power
To wave it on the Donjon Tower,
So heavily it hung.
The scouts had parted on their search,
The Castle gates were barr'd;
Above the gloomy portal arch,
Timing his footsteps to a march,
The Warder kept his guard;
Low humming, as he paced along,
Some ancient Border gathering song.

III.

A distant trampling sound he hears;
He looks abroad and soon appears,
O'er Horncliff-hill a plump* of spears
Beneath a pennon gay;
A horseman, darting from the crowd,
Like lightning from a summer cloud,
Spurs on his mettled courser proud,
Before the dark array.
Beneath the sable palisade,
That closed the Castle barricade,
His bugle-horn he blew;
The warder hasted from the wall,
And warn'd the Captain in the hall,
For well the blast he knew;
And joyfully that knight did call,
To sewer, squire, and seneschal.

IV.

"Now broach ye a pipe of Malvoisie,
Bring pasties of the doe,
And quickly make the entrance free,
And bid my heralds ready be,
And every minstrel sound his glee,
And all our trumpets blow;
And, from the platform, spare ye not
To fire a noble salvo-shot;
Lord MARMION waits below!"
Then to the Castle's lower ward
Sped forty yeomen tall,
The iron-studded gates unbarr'd,
Raised the portcullis' ponderous guard,
The lofty palisade unsparr'd,
And let the drawbridge fall.

V.

Along the bridge Lord Marmion rode,
Proudly his red-roan charger trode,
His helm hung at the saddlebow;
Well by his visage you might know
He was a stalworth knight, and keen,
And had in many a battle been;
The scar on his brown cheek reveal'd
A token true of Bosworth field;
His eyebrow dark, and eye of fire,
Show'd spirit proud, and prompt to ire;
Yet lines of thought upon his cheek
Did deep design and counsel speak.
His forehead, by his casque worn bare,
His thick mustache, and curly hair,
Coal black, and grizzled here and there,
But more through toil than age;
His square-turn'd joints, and strength of limb,
Show'd him no carpet knight so trim,
But in close fight a champion grim,
In camps a leader sage.

* This word properly applies to a flight of water-fowl; but is applied, by analogy, to a body of horse —
"There is a knight of the North Country,
Which leads a lusty *plump* of spears."—
Flodden Field.

VI.

Well was he arm'd from head to heel,
In mail and plate of Milan steel;
But his strong helm, of mighty cost,
Was all with burnish'd gold emboss'd;
Amid the plumage of the crest,
A falcon hover'd on her nest,
With wings outspread, and forward breast;
E'en such a falcon, on his shield,
Soar'd sable in an azure field:
The golden legend bore aright,
Who checks at me, to death is dight.
Blue was the charger's broider'd rein;
Blue ribbons deck'd his arching mane;
The knightly housing's ample fold
Was velvet blue, and trapp'd with gold.

VII.

Behind him rode two gallant squires,
Of noble name, and knightly sires;
They burn'd the gilded spurs to claim;
For well could each a war-horse tame,
Could draw the bow, the sword could sway,
And lightly bear the ring away;
Nor less with courteous precepts stored,
Could dance in hall, and carve at board,
And frame love ditties passing rare,
And sing them to a lady fair.

VIII.

Four men at arms came at their backs,
With halbert, bill, and battle axe:
They bore Lord Marmion's lance so strong,
And led his sumpter-mules along,
And ambling palfrey, when at need
Him listed ease his battle steed.
The last and trustiest of the four,
On high his forky pennon bore;
Like swallow's tail, in shape and hue,
Flutter'd the streamer glossy blue,
Where, blazon'd sable, as before,
The towering falcon seem'd to soar.
Last, twenty yeomen, two and two,
In hosen black, and jerkins blue,
With falcons broider'd on each breast,
Attended on their lord's behest:
Each, chosen for an archer good,
Knew hunting-craft by lake or wood;
Each one a six-foot bow in his hand,
And far a cloth-yard shaft Holy Land.
Each held a boar-spear tough
And at their belts their quivers
Their dusty palfreys, and array,
Show'd they had march'd a weary

IX.

'Tis meet that I should tell you now,
How fairly arm'd, and order'd how,
The soldiers of the guard,
With musket, pike, and morion,
To welcome noble Marmion,
Stood in the Castle-yard;
Minstrels and trumpeters were there,
The gunner held his linstock yare,
For welcome-shot prepared:
Enter'd the train, and such a clang,
As then through all his turrets rang,
Old Norham never heard.

X.

The guards their morrice-pikes advanced,
The trumpets flourish'd brave,
The cannon from the ramparts glanced,
And thundering welcome gave.
A blithe salute, in martial sort,
The minstrels well might sound,
For, as Lord Marmion cross'd the court,
He scatter'd angels round.
"Welcome to Norham, Marmion!
Stout heart, and open hand!
Well dost thou brook thy gallant roan,
Thou flower of English land!"

XI.

Two pursuivants, whom tabarts deck,
With silver scutcheon round their neck,
Stood on the steps of stone,
By which you reach the donjon gate,
And there, with herald pomp and state,
They hail'd Lord Marmion:
They hail'd him Lord of Fontenaye,
Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye,
Of Tamworth tower and town;
And he, their courtesy to requite,
Gave them a chain of twelve marks weight,
All as he lighted down.

night not sing or say,
ited meal a-day,
at in Durham aisle,
for our success the while.
rham vicar, woe betide,
too well in case to ride,
The priest of Shoreswood—he could rein
The wildest war-horse in your train,
But then, no spearman in the hall
Will sooner swear, or stab, or brawl
Friar John of Tillmouth were the man
A blithesome brother at the can,
A welcome guest in hall and bower,
He knows each castle, town, and tower,
In which the wine and ale is good,
'Twixt Newcastle and Holy-Rood
But that good man, as ill befalls,
Hath seldom left our castle walls,
Since, on the vigil of St Bede,
In evil hour, he cross'd the Tweed,
To teach Dame Alison her creed
Old Bughtrig found him with his wife,
And John, an enemy to strife,
Sans frock and hood, fled for his life
The jealous churl hath deeply swore,
That, if again he venture o'er,
He shall shrieve penitent no more.
Little he loves such risks, I know,
Yet, in your guard, perchance will go"

XXII

Young Selby, at the fair hall-board,
Carved to his uncle and that lord,
And reverently took up the word —
"Kind uncle, woe were we each one,
If harm should hap to brother John
He is a man of mirthful speech,
Can many a game and gambol teach;
Full well at tables can he play,
And sweep at bowls the stake away.
None can a lustier carol bawl,
The needfulest among us all,
When time hangs heavy in the hall,
And snow comes thick at Christmas tide,
And we can neither hunt, nor ride
A foray on the Scottish side
The vow'd revenge of Bughtrig rude,
May end in worse than loss of hood
Let Friar John, in safety, still
In chimney-corner snore his fill,
Roast hissing crabs, or flagons swill
Last night, to Norham there came one,
Will better guide Lord Marmion."—
"Nephew," quoth Heron, "by my fay,
Well hast thou spoke; say forth thy say."—

XXIII.

"Here is a holy Palmer come,
From Salem first, and last from Rome
One, that hath kiss'd the blessed tomb,
And visited each holy shrine,
In Araby and Palestine;
On hills of Armenie hath been,
Where Noah's ark may yet be seen;
By that Red Sea, too, hath he trod,
Which parted at the prophet's rod;
In Sinai's wilderness he saw
The Mount, where Israel heard the law,
'Mid thunder-dint and flashing levin,
And shadows, mists, and darkness, given.
He shows St James's cockle shell,
Of fair Montserrat, too, can tell,
And of that Grot where Olives nod,
Where, darling of each heart and eye,
From all the youth of Sicily,
Saint Rosalie retired to God

XXIV.

"To stout Saint George of Norwich merry,
Saint Thomas, too, of Canterbury,
Cuthbert of Durham and Saint Bede,
For his sins' pardon hath he pray'd
He knows the passes of the North,
And seeks far shrines beyond the Forth;
Little he eats, and long will wake,
And drinks but of the stream or lake.
This were a guide o'er moor and dale,
But, when our John hath quaff'd his ale,
As little as the wind that blows,
And warms itself against his nose,
Kens he, or cares, which way he goes"—

XXV

"Gramercy!" quoth Lord Marmion,
"Full loath were I that Friar John,
That venerable man, for me
Were placed in fear or jeopardy.

If this same Palmer will me lead
From hence to Holy-Rood,
Like his good saint, I'll pay his meed,
Instead of cockle-shell or bead,
With angels fair and good.
I love such holy ramblers; still
They know to charm a weary hill,
With song, romance, or lay.
Some jovial tale, or glee, or jest,
Some lying legend, at the least,
They bring to cheer the way."—

XXVI.

"Ah! noble sir," young Selby said,
And finger on his lip he laid,
"This man knows much—perchance e'en more
Than he could learn by holy lore.
Still to himself he's muttering,
And shrinks as at some unseen thing.
Last night we listen'd at his cell;
Strange sounds we heard, and, sooth to tell,
He murmur'd on till morn, howe'er
No living mortal could be near.
Sometimes I thought I heard it plain,
As other voices spoke again.
I cannot tell—I like it not—
Friar John hath told us it is wrote,
No conscience clear, and void of wrong,
Can rest awake, and pray so long.
Himself still sleeps before his beads
Have mark'd ten aves, and two creeds."—

XXVII.

"Let pass," quoth Marmion, "by my fay,
This man shall guide me on my way,
Although the great arch fiend and he
Had sworn themselves of company.
So please you, gentle youth, to call
This Palmer to the Castle-hall."
The summon'd Palmer came in place;
His sable cowl o'erhung his face;
In his black mantle was he clad,
With Peter's keys, in cloth of red,
On his broad shoulders wrought;
The scallop shell his cap did deck;
The crucifix around his neck
Was from Loretto brought;
[illegible],
[illegible]ore;
The faded palm-branch in his hand
Show'd pilgrim from the Holy Land.

XXVIII.

When as the Palmer came in hall,
Nor lord, nor knight, was there more tall,
Or had a statelier step withal,
Or look'd more high and keen;
For no saluting did he wait,
But strode across the hall of state,
And fronted Marmion where he sate,
As he his peer had been.
But his gaunt frame was worn with toil;
His cheek was sunk, alas the while!
And when he struggled at a smile,
His eye look'd haggard wild:
Poor wretch! the mother that him bare,
If she had been in presence there,
In his wan face, and sun-burn'd hair,
She had not known her child.
Danger, long travel, want, or woe,
Soon change the form that best we know—
For deadly fear can time outgo,
And blanch at once the hair;
Hard toil can roughen form and face,
And want can quench the eye's bright grace,
Nor does old age a wrinkle trace
More deeply than despair.
Happy whom none of these befall,
But this poor Palmer knew them all.

XXIX.

Lord Marmion then his boon did ask;
The Palmer took on him the task,
So he would march with morning tide,
To Scottish court to be his guide.
"But I have solemn vows to pay,
And may not linger by the way,
To fair St Andrews bound,
Within the ocean cave to pray,
Where good Saint Rule his holy lay,
From midnight to the dawn of day,
Sung to the billows' sound;
Thence to Saint Fillan's blessed well,
Whose spring can frenzied dreams dispel,

And the crazed brain restore
Saint Mary grant, that cave or spring
Could back to peace my bosom bring,
Or bid it throb no more!"

XXX

And now the midnight draught of sleep,
Where wine and spices richly steep,
In massive bowl of silver deep,
The page presents on knee
Lord Marmion drank a fair good rest,
The Captain pledged his noble guest,
The cup went through among the rest,
Who drained it merrily;
Alone the Palmer pass'd it by,
Though Selby press'd him courteously.
This was a sign the feast was o'er;
It hush'd the merry wassel roar,
The minstrels ceased to sound
Soon in the castle nought was heard,
But the slow footstep of the guard,
Pacing his sober round

XXXI

With early dawn Lord Marmion rose:
And first the chapel doors unclose,
Then, after morning rites were done,
(A hasty mass from Friar John,)
And knight and squire had broke their fast
On rich substantial repast,
Lord Marmion's bugles blew to horse
Then came the stirrup cup in course
Between the Baron and his host,
No point of courtesy was lost;
High thanks were by Lord Marmion paid,
Solemn excuse the Captain made,
Till, filing from the gate, had pass'd
That noble train, their Lord the last
Then loudly rung the trumpet call,
Thunder'd the cannon from the wall,
And shook the Scottish shore:
Around the castle eddied slow,
Volumes of smoke as white as snow,
And hid its turrets hoar;
Till they roll'd forth upon the air,
And met the river breezes there,
Which gave again the prospect fair.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SECOND.

TO THE REV JOHN MARRIOTT, A M

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest

The scenes are desert now, and bare,
Where flourish'd once a forest fair,
When these waste glens with copse were lined,
And peopled with the hart and hind.
Yon Thorn—perchance whose prickly spears
Have fenced him for three hundred years,
While fell around his green compeers—
Yon lonely Thorn, would he could tell
The changes of his parent dell,
Since he, so grey and stubborn now,
Waved in each breeze a sapling bough
Would he could tell how deep the shade
A thousand mingled branches made;
How broad the shadows of the oak,
How clung the rowan* to the rock,
And through the foliage show'd his head,
With narrow leaves and berries red;
What pines on every mountain sprung,
O'er every dell what birches hung,
In every breeze what aspens shook,
What alders shaded every brook!

"Here, in my shade," methinks he'd say.
"The mighty stag at noon-tide lay.
"The wolf I've seen, a fiercer game,
(The neighbouring dingle bears his name,)
With lurching step around me prowl
And stop, against the moon to howl
The mountain-boar, on battle set,
His tusks upon my stem would whet;
While doe, and roe, and red-deer good,
Have bounded by, through gay green wood.

* Mountain ash.

Then oft, from Newark's riven tower,
Sallied a Scottish monarch's power:
A thousand vassals muster'd round,
With horse, and hawk, and horn, and hound;
And I might see the youth intent,
Guard every pass with crossbow bent;
And through the brake the rangers stalk,
And falc'ners hold the ready hawk;
And foresters in green-wood trim,
Lead in the leash the gazehounds grim,
Attentive as the bratchet's* bay,
From the dark covert drove the prey,
To slip them as he broke away.
The startled quarry bounds amain,
As fast the gallant greyhounds strain;
Whistles the arrow from the bow,
Answers the harquebuss below;
While all the rocking hills reply,
To hoof-clang, hound, and hunters' cry,
And bugles ringing lightsomely."

Of such proud huntings, many tales
Yet linger in our lonely dales,
Up pathless Ettrick and on Yarrow,
Where erst the outlaw drew his arrow.
But not more blithe that silvan court,
Than we have been at humbler sport;
Though small our pomp, and mean our game,
Our mirth, dear Marriott, was the same.
Remember'st thou my greyhounds true?
O'er holt or hill there never flew,
From slip or leash there never sprang,
More fleet of foot, or sure of fang.
Nor dull, between each merry chase,
Pass'd by the intermitted space;
For we had fair resource in store,
In Classic and in Gothic lore:
We mark'd each memorable scene,
And held poetic talk between;
Nor hill, nor brook, we paced along,
But had its legend or its song.
All silent now—for now are still
Thy bowers, untenanted Bowhill!†
No longer, from thy mountains dun,
The yeoman hears the well-known gun,
And while his honest heart glows warm,
At thought of his paternal farm,
Round to his mates a brimmer fills,
And drinks, "The Chieftain of the Hills!"
No fairy forms, in Yarrow's bowers,
Trip o'er the walks, or tend the flowers,
Fair as the elves whom Janet saw
By moonlight dance on Carterhaugh;
No youthful Baron's left to grace
The Forest-Sheriff's lonely chase,
And ape, in manly step and tone,
The majesty of Oberon:
And she is gone, whose lovely face
Is but her least and lowest grace;
Though if to Sylphid Queen 'twere given
To show our earth the charms of Heaven,
She could not glide along the air,
With form more light, or face more fair.
No more the widow's deafen'd ear
Grows quick that lady's step to hear:
At noontide she expects her not,
Nor busies her to trim the cot;
Pensive she turns her humming wheel,
Or pensive cooks her orphans' meal;
Yet blesses, ere she deals their bread,
The gentle hand by which they're fed.*

From Yair,—which hills so closely bind,
Scarce can the Tweed his passage find,
Though much he fret, and chafe, and toil,
Till all his eddying currents boil,—
Her long-descended lord is gone,
And left us by the stream alone.
And much I miss those sportive boys,
Companions of my mountain joys,
Just at the age 'twixt boy and youth,
When thought is speech, and speech is truth.
Close to my side, with what delight
They press'd to hear of Wallace wight,
When, pointing to his airy mound,
I call'd his ramparts holy ground!†
Kindled their brows to hear me speak;
And I have smiled, to feel my cheek,

*Slowhound.

† A seat of the Duke of Buccleuch in Ettrick Forest.

* Harriet, Duchess of Buccleuch, and mother of the present Duke, was at the date of the poem Countess of Dalkeith. She was much given to works of charity and spent a great deal of time when she resided at Bowood in visiting the poor of the neighbourhood.

† On a high mountainous ridge above the farm of Ashestiel is a fosse called Wallace's Trench.

Despite the difference of our years,
Return again the glow of theirs
Ah, happy boys! such feelings pure,
They will not, cannot, long endure,
Condemn'd to stem the world's rude tide,
You may not linger by the side,
For Fate shall thrust you from the shore,
And Passion ply the sail and oar
Yet cherish the remembrance still,
Of the lone mountain, and the rill;
For trust, dear boys, the time will come,
When fiercer transport shall be dumb,
And you will think right frequently,
But, well I hope, without a sigh,
On the free hours that we have spent
Together, on the brown hill's bent.

When, musing on companions gone,
We doubly feel ourselves alone,
Something, my friend, we yet may gain;
There is a pleasure in this pain:
It soothes the love of lonely rest,
Deep in each gentler heart impress'd
'Tis silent amid worldly toils,
And stifled soon by mental broils;
But, in a bosom thus prepared,
Its still small voice is often heard,
Whispering a mingled sentiment,
'Twixt resignation and content.
Oft in my mind such thoughts awake,
By lone Saint Mary's silent lake.
Thou know'st it well,—nor fen, nor sedge,
Pollute the pure lake's crystal edge,
Abrupt and sheer, the mountains sink
At once upon the level brink;
And just a trace of silver sand
Marks where the water meets the land
Far in the mirror, bright and blue,
Each hill's huge outline you may view:
Shaggy with heath, but lonely bare,
Nor tree, nor bush, nor brake, is there,
Save where, of land, yon slender line
Bears thwart the lake the scatter'd pine
Yet even this nakedness has power,
And aids the feeling of the hour:
Nor thicket, dell, nor copse you spy,
Where living thing concealed might lie,
Nor point, retiring, hides a dell,
Where swain, or woodman lone, might dwell;
There's nothing left to fancy's guess,
You see that all is loneliness:
And silence aids—though the steep hills
Send to the lake a thousand rills;
In summer tide, so soft they weep,
The sound but lulls the ear asleep,
Your horse's hoof-tread sounds too rude,
So stilly is the solitude.

Nought living meets the eye or ear,
But well I ween the dead are near;
For though, in feudal strife, a foe
Hath lain Our Lady's chapel low,
Yet still, beneath the hallow'd soil,
The peasant rests him from his toil,
And, dying, bids his bones be laid,
Where erst his simple fathers pray'd

If age had tamed the passions' strife,
And fate had cut my ties to life,
Here, have I thought, 'twere sweet to dwell,
And rear again the chaplain's cell,
Like that same peaceful hermitage,
Where Milton long'd to spend his age
'Twere sweet to mark the setting day
On Bourhope's lonely top decay;
And, as it faint and feeble died
On the broad lake, and mountain's side,
To say, "Thus pleasures fade away;
Youth, talents, beauty, thus decay,
And leave us dark, forlorn, and grey;"
Then gaze on Dryhope's ruin'd tower,
And think on Yarrow's faded Flower
And when that mountain-sound I heard,
Which bids us be for storm prepared,
The distant rustling of his wings,
As up his force the Tempest brings,
'Twere sweet, ere yet his terrors rave,
To sit upon the Wizard's grave—
That Wizard-Priest's, whose bones are thrust
From company of holy dust;
On which no sunbeam ever shines—
(So superstition's creed divines)—
Thence view the lake, with sullen roar,
Heave her broad billows to the shore,
And mark the wild swans mount the gale,
Spread wide through mist their snowy sail,
And ever stoop again, to lave
Their bosoms on the surging wave:

Then, when against the driving hail
No longer might my plaid avail,
Back to my lonely home retire,
And light my lamp, and trim my fire;
There ponder o'er some mystic lay,
Till the wild tale had all its sway,
And, in the bittern's distant shriek,
I heard unearthly voices speak,
And thought the Wizard-Priest was come,
To claim again his ancient home!
And bade my busy fancy range,
To frame him fitting shape and strange,
Till from the task my brow I clear'd
And smiled to think that I had fear'd

But chief, 'twere sweet to think such life,
(Though but escape from fortune's strife,)
Something most matchless good and wise,
A great and grateful sacrifice,
And deem each hour, to musing given,
A step upon the road to heaven.

Yet him, whose heart is ill at ease,
Such peaceful solitudes displease,
He loves to drown his bosom's jar
Amid the elemental war:
And my black Palmer's choice had been
Some ruder and more savage scene,
Like that which frowns round dark Loch-skene
There eagles scream from isle to shore,
Down all the rocks the torrents roar,
O'er the black waves incessant driven,
Dark mists infect the summer heaven,
Through the rude barriers of the lake
Away its hurrying waters break,
Faster and whiter dash and curl,
Till down yon dark abyss they hurl.
Rises the fog-smoke white as snow,
Thunders the viewless stream below,
Diving, as if condemn'd to lave
Some demon's subterranean cave,
Who, prison'd by enchanter's spell,
Shakes the dark rock with groan and yell.
And well that Palmer's form and mien
Had suited with the stormy scene,
Just on the edge, straining his ken
To view the bottom of the den,
Where, deep deep down, and far within,
Toils with the rocks the roaring linn;
Then, issuing forth one foamy wave,
And wheeling round the Giant's Grave,
White as the snowy charger's tail
Drives down the pass of Moffatdale.

Marriott, thy harp, on Isis strung,
To many a Border theme has rung:
Then list to me, and thou shalt know
Of this mysterious Man of Woe.

CANTO SECOND

The Convent.

I.

THE breeze, which swept away the smoke,
Round Norham Castle roll'd,
When all the loud artillery spoke,
With lightning-flash, and thunder stroke,
As Marmion left the Hold.
It curl'd not Tweed alone, that breeze,
For, far upon Northumbrian seas,
It freshly blew, and strong,
Where, from high Whitby's cloister'd pile,
Bound to St Cuthbert's Holy Isle,
It bore a bark along.
Upon the gale she stoop'd her side,
And bounded o'er the swelling tide,
As she were dancing home;
The merry seamen laugh'd, to see
Their gallant ship so lustily
Furrow the green sea-foam.
Much joy'd they in their honour'd freight;
For, on the deck, in chair of state,
The Abbess of Saint Hilda placed,
With five fair nuns, the galley graced.

II.

'Twas sweet to see these holy maids,
Like birds escaped to greenwood shades,

Their first flight from the cage,
How timid, and how curious too,
For all to them was strange and new,
And all the common sights they view,
Their wonderment engage
One eyed the shrouds and swelling sail,
With many a benedicite,
One at the rippling surge grew pale,
And would for terror pray ;
Then shriek'd, because the sea-dog, nigh,
His round black head, and sparkling eye,
Rear'd o'er the foaming spray ,
And one would still adjust her veil,
Disorder'd by the summer gale,
Perchance lest some more worldly eye
Her dedicated charms might spy ;
Perchance, because such action graced
Her fair-turn'd arm and slender waist
Light was each simple bosom there,
Save two, who ill might pleasure share,—
The Abbess, and the Novice Clare.

III

The Abbess was of noble blood,
But early took the veil and hood,
Ere upon life she cast a look,
Or knew the world that she forsook.
Fair too she was, and kind had been
As she was fair, but ne'er had seen
For her a timid lover sigh,
Nor knew the influence of her eye.
Love, to her ear, was but a name,
Combined with vanity and shame ;
Her hopes, her fears, her joys, were all
Bounded within the cloister wall :
The deadliest sin her mind could reach,
Was of monastic rule the breach ;
And her ambition's highest aim
To emulate Saint Hilda's fame.
For this she gave her ample dower,
To raise the convent's eastern tower ,
For this, with carving rare and quaint,
She deck'd the chapel of the saint,
And gave the relic-shrine of cost,
With ivory and gems emboss'd
The poor her Convent's bounty blest,
The pilgrim in its halls found rest

IV.

Black was her garb, her rigid rule
Reform'd on Benedictine school ;
Her cheek was pale, her form was spare ,
Vigils, and penitence austere,
Had early quench'd the light of youth,
But gentle was the dame, in sooth ;
Though vain of her religious sway,
She loved to see her maids obey ;
Yet nothing stern was she in cell,
And the nuns loved their Abbess well.
Sad was this voyage to the dame ,
Summon'd to Lindisfarne, she came,
There, with Saint Cuthbert's Abbot old,
And Tynemouth's Prioress, to hold
A chapter of Saint Benedict,
For inquisition stern and strict,
On two apostates from the faith,
And, if need were, to doom to death

V.

Nought say I here of Sister Clare,
Save this, that she was young and fair ,
As yet a novice unprofess'd,
Lovely and gentle, but distress'd
She was betroth'd to one now dead,
Or worse, who had dishonour'd fled.
Her kinsmen bade her give her hand
To one, who loved her for her land .
Herself, almost heart-broken now,
Was bent to take the vestal vow,
And shroud, within Saint Hilda's gloom
Her blasted hopes and wither'd bloom

VI

She sate upon the galley's prow,
And seem'd to mark the waves below ;
Nay, seem'd, so fixed her look and eye,
To count them as they glided by
She saw them not—'twas seeming all—
Far other scene her thoughts recall,—
A sun-scorch'd desert, waste and bare,
Nor waves, nor breezes, *murmur'd* there ,
There saw she, where some careless hand
O'er a dead corpse had heap'd the sand,
To hide it till the jackals come,
To tear it from the scanty tomb —
See what a woful look was given,
As she raised up her eyes to heaven !

VII

Lovely, and gentle, and distress'd—
These charms might tame the fiercest breast ;

Harpers have sung, and poets told,
That he, in fury uncontroll'd,
The shaggy monarch of the wood,
Before a virgin, fair and good,
Hath pacified his savage mood!
But passions in the human frame
Oft put the lion's rage to shame:
And jealousy, by dark intrigue,
With sordid avarice in league,
Had practised with their bowl and knife,
Against the mourner's harmless life.
This crime was charged 'gainst those who lay
Prison'd in Cuthbert's islet grey.

VIII.

And now the vessel skirts the strand
Of mountainous Northumberland;
Towns, towers, and halls, successive rise,
And catch the nuns' delighted eyes.
Monk-Wearmouth soon behind them lay,
And Tynemouth's priory and bay;
They mark'd, amid her trees, the hall
Of lofty Seaton-Delaval;
They saw the Blythe and Wansbeck floods
Rush to the sea through sounding woods;
They pass'd the tower of Widderington,
Mother of many a valiant son,
At Coquet isle their beads they tell
To the good Saint who own'd the cell;
Then did the Alne attention claim,
And Warkworth, proud of Percy's name,
And next, they cross'd themselves, to hear
The whitening breakers sound so near,
Where, boiling through the rocks, they roar
On Dunstanborough's cavern'd shore;
Thy tower, proud Bamborough, mark'd they there,
King Ida's castle, huge and square,
From its tall rock look grimly down,
And on the swelling ocean frown;
Then from the coast they bore away,
And reach'd the Holy Island's bay.

IX.

The tide did now its flood-mark gain,
And girdled in the Saint's domain:
For, with the flow and ebb, its style
Varies from continent to isle;
Dry-shod, o'er sands, twice every day,
The pilgrims to the shrine find way;
Twice every day, the waves efface
Of staves and sandall'd feet the trace.
As to the port the galley flew,
Higher and higher rose to view
The Castle with its battled walls,
The ancient Monastery's halls,
A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile,
Placed on the margin of the isle.

X.

In Saxon strength that Abbey frown'd,
With massive arches broad and round,
That rose alternate, row and row,
On ponderous columns, short and low,
Built ere the art was known,
By pointed aisle, and shafted stall,
The arcades of an alley'd walk
To emulate in stone.
On the deep walls, the heathen Dane
Had pour'd his impious rage in vain;
And needful was such strength to these,
Exposed to the tempestuous seas,
Scourged by the winds' eternal sway,
Open to rovers fierce as they,
Which could twelve hundred years withstand
Winds, waves, and northern pirates' hand.
Not but that portions of the pile,
Rebuilded in a later style,
Show'd where the spoiler's hand had been,
Not but the wasting sea breeze keen
Had worn the pillar's carving quaint,
And moulder'd in his niche the saint,
And rounded, with consuming power,
The pointed angles of each tower,
Yet still entire the Abbey stood,
Like veteran, worn, but unsubdued.

XI.

Soon as they near'd his turrets strong,
The maidens raised Saint Hilda's song,
And with the sea-wave and the wind,
Their voices, sweetly shrill, combined,
And made harmonious close;
Then, answering from the sandy shore,
Half-drown'd amid the breakers' roar,
According chorus rose:

Down to the haven of the Isle,
The monks and nuns in order file,
From Cuthbert's cloisters grim;
Banner, and cross, and relics there,
To meet Saint Hilda's maids, they bare;
And, as they caught the sounds on air,
They echoed back the hymn.
The islanders, in joyous mood,
Rush'd emulously through the flood,
To hale the bark to land;
Conspicuous by her veil and hood,
Signing the cross, the Abbess stood,
And bless'd them with her hand.

XII.

Suppose we now the welcome said,
Suppose the Convent banquet made:
All through the holy dome,
Through cloister, aisle, and gallery,
Wherever vestal maid might pry,
Nor risk to meet unhallow'd eye,
The stranger sisters roam:
Till fell the evening damp with dew,
And the sharp sea-breeze coldly blew,
For there, even summer night is chill.
Then, having stray'd and gazed their fill,
They closed around the fire;
And all, in turn, essay'd to paint
The rival merits of their saint,
A theme that ne'er can tire
A holy maid; for, be it known,
That their saint's honour is their own.

XIII.

Then Whitby's nuns exulting told,
How to their house three Barons bold
Must menial service do;
While horns blow out a note of shame,
And monks cry "Fye upon your name!
In wrath, for loss of silvan game,
Saint Hilda's priest ye slew."—
"This, on Ascension-day, each year,
While labouring on our harbour-pier,
Must Herbert, Bruce, and Percy hear."—
They told, how in their convent-cell
A Saxon princess once did dwell,
The lovely Edelfled;
And how, of thousand snakes, each one
Was changed into a coil of stone,
When holy Hilda pray'd;
Themselves, within their holy bound,
Their stony folds had often found.
They told, how sea-fowls' pinions fail,
As over Whitby's towers they sail,
And, sinking down, with flutterings faint,
They do their homage to the saint.

XIV.

Nor did Saint Cuthbert's daughters fail
To vie with these in holy tale;
His body's resting-place of old,
How oft their patron changed, they told;
How, when the rude Dane burn'd their pile,
The monks fled forth from Holy Isle,
O'er northern mountain, marsh, and moor,
From sea to sea, from shore to shore,
Seven years Saint Cuthbert's corpse they bore.
They rested them in fair Melrose;
But though, alive, he loved it well,
Not there his relics might repose;
For, wondrous tale to tell!
In his stone-coffin forth he rides,
A ponderous bark for river tides,
Yet light as gossamer it glides,
Downward to Tilmouth cell.
Nor long was his abiding there,
For southward did the saint repair;
Chester-le-Street, and Rippon, saw
His holy corpse, ere Wardilaw
Hail'd him with joy and fear;
And, after many wanderings past,
He chose his lordly seat at last,
Where his cathedral, huge and vast,
Looks down upon the Wear:
There, deep in Durham's Gothic shade
His relics are in secret laid;
But none may know the place,
Save of his holiest servants three,
Deep sworn to solemn secrecy,
Who share that wondrous grace.

XV.

Who may his miracles declare!
Even Scotland's dauntless king, and heir
(Although with them they led
Galwegians, wild as ocean's gale,
And Lodon's knights, all sheathed in mail,
And the bold men of Teviotdale,)
Before his standard fled.

'Twas he, to vindicate his reign,
Edged Alfred's falchion on the Dane,
And turn'd the Conqueror back again,
When, with his Norman bowyer band,
He came to waste Northumberland.

XVI.

But fain Saint Hilda's nuns would learn
If, on a rock, by Lindisfarne,
Saint Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame
The sea-born beads that bear his name:
Such tales had Whitby's fishers told,
And said they might his shape behold,
And hear his anvil sound;
A deaden'd clang,—a huge dim form,
Seen but, and heard, when gathering storm
And night were closing round.
But this, as tale of idle fame,
The nuns of Lindisfarne disclaim.

XVII.

While round the fire such legends go,
Far different was the scene of woe,
Where, in a secret aisle beneath,
Council was held of life and death.
It was more dark and lone that vault,
Than the worst dungeon cell:
Old Colwulf built it, for his fault,
In penitence to dwell,
When he, for cowl and beads, laid down
The Saxon battle-axe and crown.
This den, which, chilling every sense
Of feeling, hearing, sight,
Was call'd the Vault of Penitence,
Excluding air and light,
Was, by the prelate Sexhelm, made
A place of burial for such dead,
As, having died in mortal sin,
Might not be laid the church within.
'Twas now a place of punishment;
Whence if so loud a shriek were sent,
As reach'd the upper air,
The hearers bless'd themselves, and said,
The spirits of the sinful dead
Bemoan'd their torments there.

XVIII.

But though, in the monastic pile,
Did of this penitential aisle
Some vague tradition go,
Few only, save the Abbot, knew
Where the place lay; and still more few
Were those, who had from him the clew
To that dread vault to go.
Victim and executioner
Were blindfold when transported there.
In low dark rounds the arches hung,
From the rude rock the side-walls sprung;
The grave-stones, rudely sculptured o'er,
Half sunk in earth, by time half wore,
Were all the pavement of the floor;
The mildew drops fell one by one,
With tinkling plash upon the stone.
A cresset,* in an iron chain,
Which served to light this drear domain,
With damp and darkness seemed to strive,
As if it scarce might keep alive;
And yet it dimly served to show
The awful conclave met below.

XIX.

There, met to doom in secrecy,
Were placed the heads of convents three:
All servants of Saint Benedict,
The statutes of whose order strict
On iron table lay;
In long black dress, on seats of stone,
Behind were these three judges shown
By the pale cresset's ray:
The Abbess of Saint Hilda's, there,
Sat for a space with visage bare,
Until, to hide her bosom's swell,
And tear-drops that for pity fell,
She closely drew her veil:
Yon shrouded figure, as I guess,
By her proud mien and flowing dress,
Is Tynemouth's haughty Prioress,
And she with awe looks pale:
And he, that Ancient Man, whose sight
Has long been quenched by age's night,
Upon whose wrinkled brow alone,
Nor ruth, nor mercy's trace is shown,
Whose look is hard and stern,—
Saint Cuthbert's Abbot is his style;
For sanctity call'd, through the isle,
The Saint of Lindisfarne.

XX.

Before them stood a guilty pair;
But, though an equal fate they share,

* Antique chandelier.

Yet one alone deserves our care
Her sex a page's dress belied ;
The cloak and doublet, loosely tied,
Obscured her charms, but could not hide
Her cap down o'er her face she drew ,
And, on her doublet breast,
She tried to hide the badge of blue,
Lord Marmion's falcon crest
But, at the Prioress' command,
A monk undid the silken band,
That tied her tresses fair,
And raised the bonnet from her head,
And down her slender form they spread,
In ringlets rich and rare
Constance de Beverley they know,
Sister profess'd of Fontevraud,
Whom the church numbered with the dead,
For broken vows, and convent fled.

XXI

When thus her face was given to view,
(Although so pallid was her hue,
It did a ghastly contrast bear
To those bright ringlets glistering fair,)
Her look composed, and steady eye,
Bespoke a matchless constancy ;
And there she stood so calm and pale,
That, but her breathing did not fail,
And motion slight of eye and head,
And of her bosom, warranted
That neither sense nor pulse she lacks,
You might have thought a form of wax,
Wrought to the very life, was there ;
So still she was, so pale, so fair.

XXII

Her comrade was a sordid soul,
Such as does murder for a meed ;
Who, but of fear, knows no control,
Because his conscience, sear'd and foul,
Feels not the import of his deed ,
One, whose brute-feeling ne'er aspires
Beyond his own more brute desires
Such tools the Tempter ever needs,
To do the savagest of deeds ,
For them no vision'd terrors daunt,
Their nights no fancied spectres haunt,
One fear with them, of all most base,
The fear of death,—alone finds place.
This wretch was clad in frock and cowl,
And shamed not loud to moan and howl,
His body on the floor to dash,
And crouch, like hound beneath the lash ,
While his mute partner, standing near,
Waited her doom without a tear.

XXIII

Yet well the luckless wretch might shriek,
Well might her paleness terror speak !
For there were seen in that dark wall,
Two niches, narrow, deep and tall ,—
Who enters at such grisly door,
Shall ne'er, I ween, find exit more.
In each a slender meal was laid,
Of roots, of water, and of bread :
By each, in Benedictine dress,
Two haggard monks stood motionless ;
Who, holding high a blazing torch,
Show'd the grim entrance of the porch
Reflecting back the smoky beam,
The dark-red walls and arches gleam
Hewn stones and cement were display'd,
And building tools in order laid.

XXIV.

These executioners were chose,
As men who were with mankind foes,
And with despite and envy fired,
Into the cloister had retired ;
Or who, in desperate doubt of grace,
Strove, by deep penance, to efface
Of some foul crime the stain ;
For, as the vassals of her will,
Such men the Church selected still,
As either joy'd in doing ill,
Or thought more grace to gain,
If, in her cause, they wrestled down
Feelings their nature strove to own
By strange device were they brought there,
They knew not how, nor knew not where.

XXV.

And now that blind old Abbot rose,
To speak the Chapter's doom,
On those the wall was to enclose,
Alive, within the tomb ,
But stopp'd, because that woful Maid,
Gathering her powers, to speak essay'd
Twice she essay'd, and twice in vain ,
Her accents might no utterance gain ,

Nought but imperfect murmurs slip
From her convulsed and quivering lip;
'Twixt each attempt all was so still,
You seem'd to hear a distant rill.—
'Twas ocean's swells and falls;
For though this vault of sin and fear
Was to the sounding surge so near,
A tempest there you scarce could hear,
So massive were the walls.

XXVI.

At length, an effort sent apart
The blood that curdled to her heart,
And light came to her eye,
And colour dawn'd upon her cheek,
A hectic and a flutter'd streak,
Like that left on the Cheviot peak,
By Autumn's stormy sky;
And when her silence broke at length,
Still as she spoke she gather'd strength,
And arm'd herself to bear.
It was a fearful sight to see
Such high resolve and constancy,
In form so soft and fair.

XXVII.

"I speak not to implore your grace,
Well know I, for one minute's space
Successless might I sue.
Nor do I speak your prayers to gain;
For if a death of lingering pain,
To cleanse my sins, be penance vain,
Vain are your masses too.—
I listen'd to a traitor's tale,
I left the convent and the veil;
For three long years I bow'd my pride,
A horse-boy in his train to ride;
And well my folly's meed he gave,
Who forfeited, to be his slave,
All here, and all beyond the grave.—
He saw young Clara's face more fair,
He knew her of broad lands the heir,
Forgot his vows, his faith forswore,
And Constance was beloved no more.—
'Tis an old tale, and often told;
But did my fate and wish agree,
Ne'er had been read, in story old,
Of maiden true betray'd for gold,
That loved, or was avenged, like me!

XXVIII.

"The King approved his favourite's aim;
In vain a rival barr'd his claim,
Whose fate with Clare's was plight,
For he attaints that rival's fame
With treason's charge—and on they came,
In mortal lists to fight.
Their oaths are said,
Their prayers are pray'd,
Their lances in the rest are laid,
They meet in mortal shock;
And, hark! the throng, with thundering cry,
Shout 'Marmion! Marmion!' to the sky,
De Wilton to the block!'
Say, ye who preach Heaven shall decide
When in the lists two champions ride,
Say, was Heaven's justice here?
When, loyal in his love and faith,
Wilton found overthrow or death,
Beneath a traitor's spear?
How false the charge, how true he fell,
This guilty packet best can tell."—
Then drew a packet from her breast,
Paused, gather'd voice, and spoke the rest.—

XXIX.

"Still was false Marmion's bridal staid;
To Whitby's convent fled the maid,
The hated match to shun.
'Ho! shifts she thus?' King Henry cried,
'Sir Marmion, she shall be thy bride,
If she were sworn a nun.'
One way remain'd—the King's command
Sent Marmion to the Scottish land:
I linger'd here, and rescue plann'd
For Clara and for me:
This caitiff Monk, for gold, did swear,
He would to Whitby's shrine repair,
And, by his drugs, my rival fair
A saint in heaven should be.
But ill the dastard kept his oath,
Whose cowardice has undone us both.

XXX.

"And now my tongue the secret tells,
Not that remorse my bosom swells,
But to assure my soul that none
Shall ever wed with Marmion.

Oft on the trampling band, from crown
Of some tall cliff, the deer look'd down,
On wing of jet, from his repose
In the deep heath, the black-cock rose;
Sprung from the gorse the timid roe,
Nor waited for the bending bow,
And when the stony path began,
By which the naked peak they wan,
Up flew the snowy ptarmigan
The noon had long been pass'd before
They gain'd the height of Lammermoor,
Thence winding down the northern way,
Before them, at the close of day,
Old Gifford's towers and hamlet lay

II.

No summons calls them to the tower,
To spend the hospitable hour
To Scotland's camp the Lord was gone,
His cautious dame, in bower alone,
Dreaded her castle to unclose,
So late, to unknown friends or foes,
On through the hamlet as they paced,
Before a porch, whose front was graced
With bush and flagon trimly placed,
Lord Marmion drew his rein:
The village inn seem'd large, though rude;
Its cheerful fire and hearty food
Might well relieve his train
Down from their seats the horsemen sprung,
With jingling spurs the court-yard rung;
They bind their horses to the stall,
For forage, food, and firing call,
And various clamour fills the hall
Weighing the labour with the cost,
Toils everywhere the bustling host

III

Soon by the chimney's merry blaze,
Through the rude hostel might you gaze,
Might see, where, in dark nook aloof,
The rafters of the sooty roof
Bore wealth of winter cheer;
Of sea-fowl dried, and solands store,
And gammons of the tusky boar,
And savoury haunch of deer.
The chimney arch projected wide,
Above, around it, and beside,
Were tools for housewives' hand,
Nor wanted, in that martial day,
The implements of Scottish fray,
The buckler, lance, and brand.
Beneath its shade, the place of state,
On oaken settle Marmion sate,
And view'd around the blazing hearth
His followers mix in noisy mirth;
Whom with brown ale, in jolly tide,
From ancient vessels ranged aside,
Full actively their host supplied.

IV

Theirs was the glee of martial breast,
And laughter theirs at little jest;
And oft Lord Marmion deigned to aid,
And mingle in the mirth they made;
For though, with men of high degree,
The proudest of the proud was he,
Yet, train'd in camps, he knew the art
To win the soldier's hardy heart.
They love a captain to obey,
Boisterous as March, yet fresh as May
With open hand, and brow as free,
Lover of wine and minstrelsy,
Ever the first to scale a tower,
As venturous in a lady's bower:—
Such buxom chief shall lead his host
From India's fires to Zembla's frost.

V

Resting upon his pilgrim staff,
Right opposite the Palmer stood,
His thin dark visage seen but half,
Half hidden by his hood.
Still fix'd on Marmion was his look,
Which he, who ill such gaze could brook,
Strove by a frown to quell;
But not for that, though more than once
Full met their stern encountering glance,
The Palmer's visage fell.

VI

By fits less frequent from the crowd
Was heard the burst of laughter loud,
For still, as squire and archer stared
On that dark face and matted beard,
Their glee and game declined
All gazed at length in silence drear,
Unbroke, save when in comrade's ear
Some yeoman, wondering in his fear,
Thus whisper'd forth his mind:—

"Saint Mary! saw'st thou e'er such sight?
How pale his cheek, his eye how bright,
Whene'er the fire-brand's fickle light
Glances beneath his cowl!
Full on our Lord he sets his eye;
For his best palfrey, would not I
Endure that sullen scowl."

VII.

But Marmion, as to chase the awe
Which thus had quell'd their hearts, who saw
The ever-varying fire-light show
That figure stern and face of woe,
Now call'd upon a Squire:—
"Fitz-Eustace, know'st thou not some lay,
To speed the lingering night away?
We slumber by the fire."—

VIII.

"So please you," thus the youth rejoin'd,
"Our choicest minstrel's left behind.
Ill may we hope to please your ear,
Accustom'd Constant's strains to hear.
The harp full deftly can he strike,
And wake the lover's lute alike;
To dear Saint Valentine, no thrush
Sings livelier from a spring-tide bush,
No nightingale her love-lorn tune
More sweetly warbles to the moon.
Woe to the cause, whate'er it be,
Detains from us his melody,
Lavish'd on rocks, and billows stern,
Or duller monks of Lindisfarne.
Now must I venture, as I may,
To sing his favourite roundelay."

IX.

A mellow voice Fitz-Eustace had,
The air he chose was wild and sad;
Such have I heard, in Scottish land,
Rise from the busy harvest band,
When falls before the mountaineer,
On Lowland plains, the ripen'd ear.
Now one shrill voice the notes prolong,
Now a wild chorus swells the song:
Oft have I listen'd, and stood still,
As it came soften'd up the hill,
And deem'd it the lament of men
Who languish'd for their native glen;
And thought how sad would be such sound
On Susquehana's swampy ground,
Kentucky's wood-encumber'd brake,
Or wild Ontario's boundless lake,
Where heart-sick exiles, in the strain,
Recall'd fair Scotland's hills again!

X.

Song.

Where shall the lover rest,
Whom the fates sever
From his true maiden's breast,
Parted for ever?
Where, through groves deep and high,
Sounds the far billow,
Where early violets die,
Under the willow.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Soft shall be his pillow.

There, through the summer day,
Cool streams are laving;
There, while the tempests sway,
Scarce are boughs waving;
There, thy rest shalt thou take,
Parted for ever,
Never again to wake,
Never, O never!

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Never, O never!

XI.

Where shall the traitor rest,
He, the deceiver,
Who could win maiden's breast,
Ruin, and leave her?
In the lost battle,
Borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle
With groans of the dying.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. There shall he be lying.

Her wing shall the eagle flap
O'er the false-hearted;
His warm blood the wolf shall lap,
Ere life be parted.
Shame and dishonour sit
By his grave ever;
Blessing shall hallow it,—
Never, O never!

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Never, O never!